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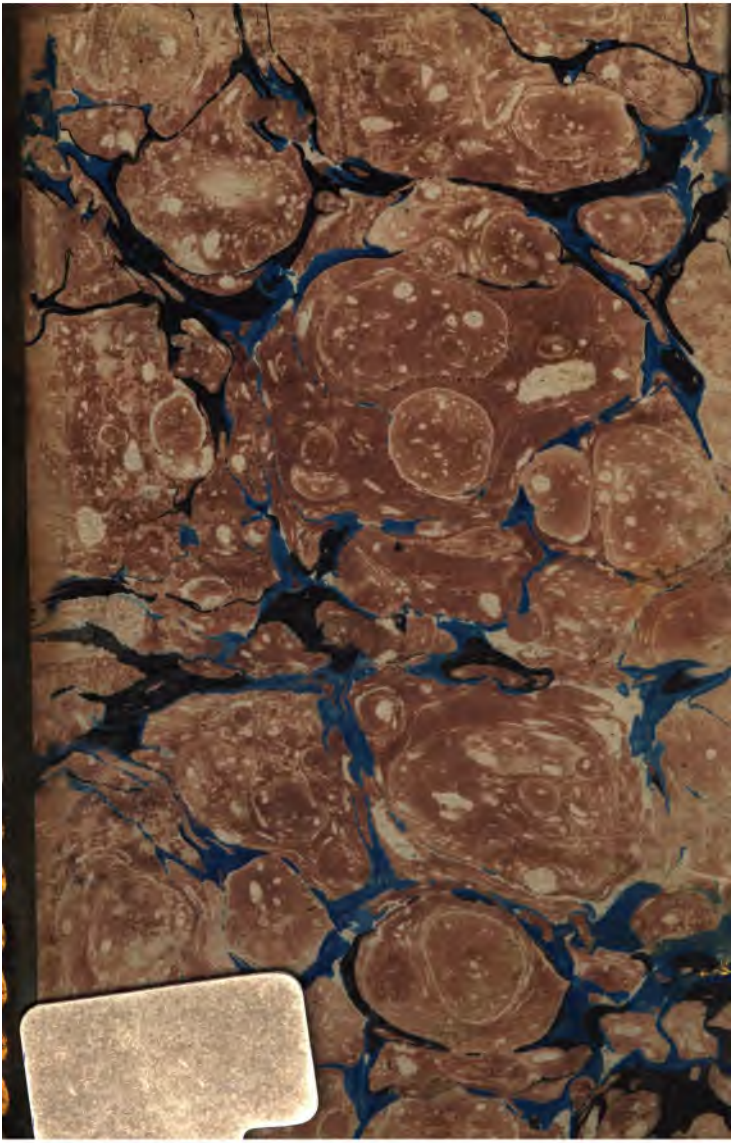

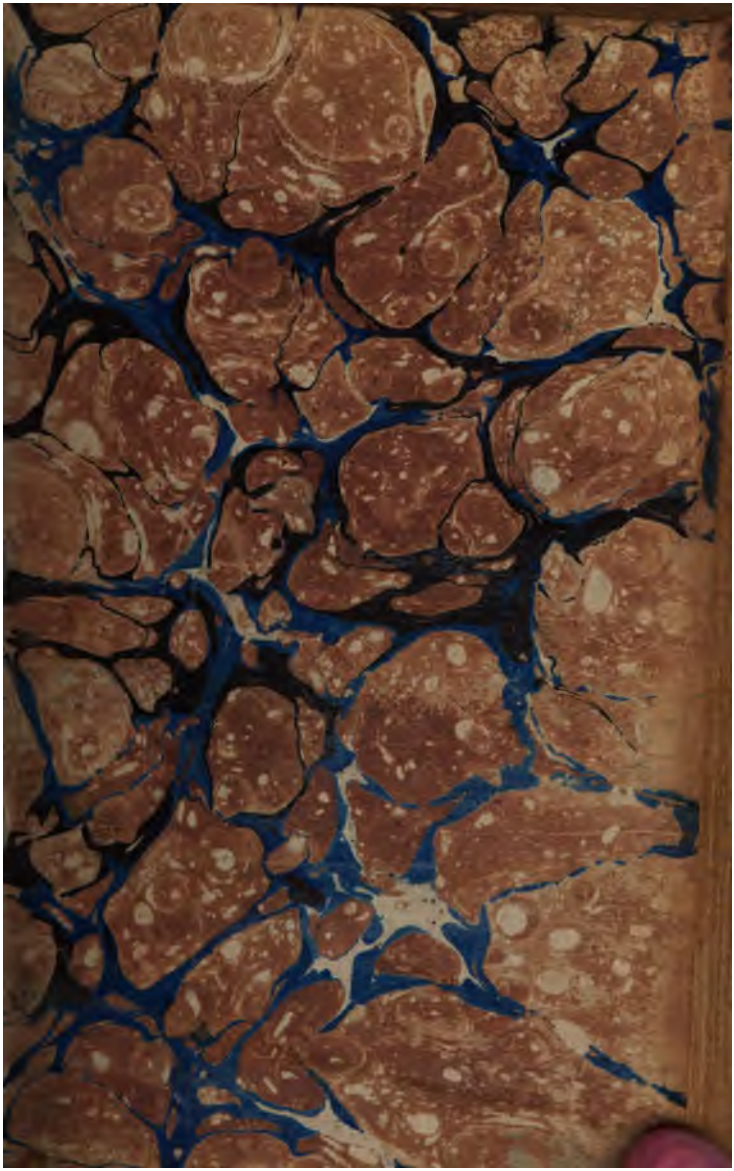

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James Beattie. L.L.D.

Published Feb.y 26th 1805. by J. Mawman. Poultry. London.

THE

MINSTREL;

OR,

THE PROGRESS OF GENIUS.

WITH SOME

OTHER POEMS.

BY JAMES BEATTIE, LL. D.

A NEW EDITION.

To which are prefixed,

MEMOIRS OF THE LIFE OF THE AUTHOR.

By ALEX. CHALMERS, Esq.

London:

PRINTED FOR J. MAWMAN,

IN THE POULTRY.

1805.

By T. Gillet, Salisbury Square, Fleet Street.

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TO

MRS. MONTAGU,

THESE

LITTLE POEMS,

NOW REVISED AND CORRECTED,

FOR THE LAST TIME,

ARE,

WITH EVERY SENTIMENT OF

ESTEEM AND GRATITUDE,

MOST RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED,

BY

THE AUTHOR.

ADVERTISEMENT.

JANUARY 1777.

HAVING lately seen in print some poems ascribed to me, which I never wrote, and some of my own inaccurately copied, I thought it would not be improper to publish, in this little volume, all the verses of which I am willing to be considered as the author. Many others I did indeed write in the early part of my life; but they were in general so incorrect, that I would not rescue them from oblivion, even if a wish could do it.

Some of the few now offered to the Public would perhaps have been suppressed, if in making this collection I had implicitly followed my own judgment. But in so small a matter who would refuse to submit his opinion to that of a friend?

It is of no consequence to the reader to know the date of any of these little poems. But some private reasons determined the Author to add, that most of them were written many years ago, and that the greater part of the MINSTREL, which is his latest attempt in this way, was composed in the year one thousand seven hundred and sixty-eight.

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MEMOIRS OF THE LIFE

OF

DR. JAMES BEATTIE.

DR. BEATTIE was born at Laurencekirk, in the county of Kincardine, Scotland, on the 5th day of November 1735. His father, who was a farmer of no considerable rank, is said to have had a turn for reading and for versifying; but as he died in 1742, when his son James was only seven years of age, could have had no great share in forming his mind.

James was sent early to the only school his birth-place afforded, where he passed his time under the instructions of a tutor named Milne, a man to whom tradition has given talents and virtues that entitled him to a situation of higher fame, and more extensive usefulness. He is said to have preferred Ovid as a school-author, whom Mr. Beattie afterwards gladly exchanged for Virgil. Virgil he had been accustomed to read with great delight in Dryden's translation, as he did Homer in that of Pope; and these, with Thomson's Seasons and Milton's Paradise Lost, of all which he was very early fond, probably gave him that taste for poetry which he afterwards cultivated with so much success.

At this school he made great proficiency by unremitting diligence, which he was sensible was the only stock he could command; and appeared to much advantage on his entering Marischal College, Aberdeen, in 1749, where he obtained the first of those bursaries or exhibitions which were left for the use of students whose parents are unable to support the entire expences of academical education. Here he first studied Greek, under Principal Thomas Blackwell, author of the "Inquiry into the Life and Writings of Homer;" "Letters concerning Mythology;" and "Memoirs of the Court of Augustus;" works which indicate no small portion of classical taste and learning, and, with the exception of a certain pomposity of manner and quaintness of phraseology, approach nearer the modern style of elegant and nervous writing than had been attempted by any of his countrymen at that period.

Blackwell, with much of the austerity of pedantry, was kind to his diligent scholars, and found in Mr. Beattie a disposition worthy of cultivation and of patronage. In the following year he bestowed on him the premium for the best Greek analysis, which happened to be part of the fourth book of the Odyssey. The other professor, with whom Mr. Beattie was particularly connected, was the late Dr. Alexander Gerard, author of "the Genius and Evidences of Christianity;" "Essays on Taste "and Genius;" and other works, particularly two volumes of "Sermons," of acknowledged merit. Under these gentlemen our author's diligence, both at college and during the vacations, was very exemplary, and he accumulated a much more various stock of general knowledge than is usual with young

men whose ultimate destination is the church. The delicacy of his health requiring amusement, he found all that amusement can give in cultivating his musical talents, which were very considerable. But there is too much reason to think that his hours of relaxation were very few, and that the earnestness with which he dissuaded his son from excessive study, arose from his repenting that he had not paid more attention to the exercises which promote health.

The only science in which he made no extraordinary proficiency, and to which he even seemed to have a dislike, was mathematics. In this, indeed, he performed the requisite tasks, but was eager to return to subjects of taste, or general literature. In every other branch of academical study, he never was satisfied with what he learned within the walls of the college. His private reading was extensive and various, and it was with him, as it appears to have been with almost every man of learning, of whom we have had a minute account; he was insensibly guided to cultivate those branches on which his future celebrity was to depend.

In 1753, having gone through every preparatory course of studies, he took the degree of Master of Arts, the only one attainable by students (except of medicine) in any of the universities of Scotland. The intermediate degree of Bachelor is not known, and that of Doctor of Laws or Divinity is usually bestowed on application, at any time of life after leaving college, without the necessity of keeping terms. Mr. Beattie, therefore, had now technically finished his education, and had a profession to seek. He had hitherto been supported by the

generous kindness of an elder brother; but he was anxious to exonerate his family from any farther burden. With this laudable view, there being a vacancy for the office of schoolmaster to the parish of Fordoun, adjoining to Laurencekirk, he accepted the appointment. There can be no doubt that he performed the duties of this situation with punctuality, but it was neither suited to his disposition, nor advantageous to his progress in life. The emoluments were very scanty, the site remote and obscure; and there was nothing in it to excite emulation, or gratify the ambition which a young man, conscious as he must have been of superior powers and knowledge, might indulge without presumption. He obtained in this place, however, a few friends, who honoured him with encouraging notice; and he employed his leisure hours in some poetical attempts, which, as they were published in the "Scots Magazine," with his initials, and, if I mistake not, with his place of abode, must have contributed to make him yet better known and respected. There are few introductions into life more successful than a pleasing or popular poem; and, indeed, any literary production from an obscure part of the country is generally considered as a phenomenon. These poems attracted the more attention that they happened to be dated from a village little known, and written by a man never heard of.

The church of Scotland was at this time the usual resource of well educated young men, and with their academical stores in full memory, there were few difficulties to be surmounted before their entrance on the sacred office. Although this

church presents no temptations to ambition, Mr. Beattie appears to have regarded it as the only means by which he could obtain an independent, however humble, rank in life; and, with his diligence, was confident that the transition from the studies of philosophy and ethics to that of divinity would be easy. He returned, therefore, during the winter to Marischal College, and attended the divinity lectures of Dr. Robert Pollock, of that college, and of Professor John Lumsden, of King's, and performed the exercises required by the rules of both.

While the church seemed his only prospect, and one which, I have been told, he never contemplated with satisfaction, although few young men lived a more pious and regular life, there occurred a vacancy for one of the masters of the grammar school of Aberdeen, a situation of considerable importance in all respects. This school, which is a public foundation, is conducted by a rector, or head master, and three subordinate masters; the whole is in the patronage of the magistrates of the city, who are, however, governed in their choice by the issue of a very severe trial of the candidate's ability, carried on by the professors of the university. On this occasion, Mr. Beattie was advised to become a candidate; but he was diffident of his qualifications, and did not think himself so retentive of the grammatical niceties of the Latin language as to be able to answer readily any question that might be put to him by older and more experienced judges. In every part of life, it may be here observed, Mr. Beattie appears to have formed an exact estimate of his own talents; and in the present instance he failed just where he expected to fail, rather in the

circumstantial than the essential requisites for the situation to which he aspired. The other candidate was accordingly preferred. But Mr. Beattie's attempt was attended with so little loss of reputation, that a second vacancy occurring a few months after, and two candidates appearing both unqualified for the office, it was presented to him by the magistrates in the most handsome manner, and without the form of a trial, and he immediately entered upon it. He was now in the midst of literary society, and had easy access to books, and his conversation-talents, it is yet remembered, daily increased the number of his friends. His emoluments were not great, but his situation had a consequence in the opinion of the public, which to so young a man was not a little flattering.

He had not been long an usher at this school before he published a volume of poems. An author's first appearance is always an important æra. Mr. Beattie's was certainly attended with circumstances that are not common. This volume was announced to the public in a more humble manner than the present state of literature is thought to demand in similar cases. On the 18th of March 1760, not the volume itself, but "Proposals for printing original Poems and Translations," were issued. The poems appeared accordingly on Feb. 16, 1761, and were published both in London and Edinburgh. They consisted partly of originals, and partly of the pieces formerly printed in the Scots Magazine, but altered and corrected, a practice which Mr. Beattie carried almost to excess in all his poetical works.*

* The translations were from Virgil, Horace, Anacreon, and Lucretius. These he afterwards totally discarded.

The praise bestowed on this volume was very flattering. The English critics, who then bestowed the rewards of literature, considered it as an acquisition to the republic of letters, and pronounced that since Mr. Gray (whom in their opinion Mr. Beattie had chosen for his model) they had not met with a poet of more harmonious numbers, more pleasing imagination, or more spirited expression.* This verdict they endeavoured to confirm by extracts from the "Ode to Peace," and "the Triumph of Melancholy." But notwithstanding praises which so evidently tended to give a currency to the poems, and which were probably repeated with eagerness by the friends who had encouraged the publication, the author, upon more serious consideration, was so dissatisfied with this volume as to destroy every copy he could procure, and I have been assured by many of his oldest friends that they have in vain endeavoured to obtain a sight of it.† Nor was this a sudden or splenetic humour in our author. Some years after, when his taste and judgment became fully matured, he refused to acknowledge more of them than are to be found in the present edition (none of which were at that time distinguished by particular favour), nor would he permit even these to be published without much solicitation.

However fastidious Mr. Beattie appears to be in this case, his opinion certainly deserves respect, and ought to prevent those rejected poems from re-publication. When an author

* Monthly Review, vol. xxiv. 1761.

† He never spoke of it to his son, and seems to think he had never seen it.

is only silent on his juvenile productions, they may be consulted by those who think they can trace in them the progress of genius, or they may be inadvertently brought forward by those who have not the judgment to discover that they do him discredit; but when he has publicly disowned, and has by every means endeavoured to suppress them, I know no principles on which they can be revived, unless to gratify dullness, which loves to bring every thing to its own level, or malice, which wars even with the dead.

But notwithstanding the lowly opinion of the author, these poems during their first circulation, which was chiefly in manuscript, contributed so much to the general reputation he had acquired, that he was considered as an honour to his country, and deserving of a higher rank among her favoured sons. Accordingly a vacancy happening in Marischal College, his friends made such earnest applications in his behalf, that in September 1760 he was appointed by his late Majesty's patent Professor of Philosophy in that College. His department in this honourable office extended to moral philosophy and logic; and it added, in his mind, a very affecting importance to it, that his was the last course of instruction previous to the students leaving college, and dispersing themselves in the world.

This promotion was sudden and unexpected; and it may be supposed that a youth of twenty-five must be ill prepared to give a course of lectures, and a train of instruction on subjects which have been but imperfectly treated by veteran philosophers. Yet it is evident from his printed works, that most of

the subjects which belong to his province, had been familiarized to him by a long course of reading and thinking, and that he had very early accustomed himself to composition; and it is highly probable that he brought into the professor's chair such a mass of materials as might with very little trouble be moulded into shape for his immediate purpose. It is certain, however, that such was his diligence, and such his love of these studies, that within a few years he was not only enabled to deliver an admirable course of lectures on moral philosophy and logic, but also to prepare for the press those works on which his fame rests; all of which, there is some reason to think, were written, or nearly written, before he gave the world the result of his philosophical studies in the celebrated "Essay on Truth." It may be added likewise, that the rank he had now attained in the university entitled him to associate more upon a level with Reid and with Campbell, with Gerard and with Gregory, men whose opinions were in many points congenial, and who have all been hailed by the sister country among the revivers of Scotch literature. Yet their names, it is gratifying to recollect, are but a small part of that catalogue which has, in less than half a century, dispelled national prejudice, and has left none of the effects of comparison except a generous and beneficial emulation.

In 1765* Mr. Beattie published "The Judgment of Paris," a poem, in 4to. Its design was to prove that virtue alone is

* The editor of the late edition of "Churchill's Works" says, that Dr. Beattie wrote about this time a poem on the "Talk of erecting a Monument to Churchill in Westminster-abbey," "in which he

capable of affording a gratification adequate to our whole nature, the pursuits of ambition or sensuality promising only partial happiness, as being adapted not to our whole constitution, but only to a part of it. So simple a position seems to require the graces of poetry to set it off. The poem I have never seen, but am told that its reception was not very favourable, and the author, with his usual deference, acquiesced so far as to omit it from every collection of his poetry. It is said to have displayed rather too much of the artifice of labour, and somewhat of the affectation of prettiness; nor was the author at this time so much accustomed to English pronunciation as to be sufficiently guarded against some very inharmonious rhymes. As he was ever bringing his experience into practice, he took every precaution to obviate this local disadvantage in the education of his son.

But although Mr. Beattie had now acquired a station in which his talents were displayed with great advantage, and commanded a very high degree of respect, the publication of the "Essay on Truth" was the great æra of his life; for this work carried his fame far beyond all local bounds and local partialities. It is not, however, necessary to enter minutely into the history of a work so well known. Its professed in-

attacked his memory in a manner unworthy of the head and heart which dictated the Minstrel," and that "his good sense induced him to expunge this poem from the subsequent editions of his works." As I have not seen this poem, which I believe never appeared in any legitimate edition of his works, I am unable to say how far the opinion here given is just. It was not very easy to speak worse of Churchill than he deserved.

tention was to trace the several kinds of evidence and reasoning up to their first principles, with a view to ascertain the STANDARD of TRUTH, and explain its IMMUTABILITY. He endeavours to show that his sentiments, however inconsistent with the genius of scepticism, and with the practice and principles of sceptical writers, were yet perfectly consistent with the genius of true philosophy, and with the practice and principles of those whom all acknowledge to have been the most successful in the investigation of truth; and he concludes with some inferences or rules, by which the most important fallacies of the sceptical philosophy may be detected by every person of COMMON SENSE, even though he should not possess acuteness of metaphysical knowledge sufficient to qualify him for a logical confutation of them.

The first edition of this Essay was published in an octavo volume in 1770, and bought up with such avidity that a second was called for, and published in the following year. The interval was short, but as the work had excited the public attention in an extraordinary degree, the result of public opinion had reached the author's ear, and to this second edition he added a postscript, in vindication of a certain degree of warmth of which he had been accused. It is not easy to recollect by whom this accusation was made, or to discover why the author thought it necessary to repel it. It certainly does not appear, either in with-holding justice from his adversaries, or in treating them with a language unbecoming the importance of the subject. He engaged in no personal controversy, and except for Hume, could not be supposed to entertain any per-

sonal regard for the writers whose sophistry he endeavoured to expose. This postscript, however, is highly valuable on many accounts. It may be read detached from the work, and read with advantage. It is not only one of the most elegant specimens of writing in our language, but a more faithful summary of the general conduct and artifices of modern sceptics than we have any where seen; and it contains a prediction of the consequences of scepticism on the happiness of mankind, which all who have lived to witness infidelity let loose upon an infatuated nation, without limitation and without punishment, must acknowledge to be true in every respect.

The mode of treating the writings of infidels, like every other species of controversy, must partake of the varieties of human temper, and temper is frequently observed to take a freer range in the closet than in society. I am willing to allow, therefore, that the author of the "Essay on Truth" is warm when compared to some who have written against Hume and the sceptical philosophers. Dr. Campbell has been praised for his urbanity to Hume, and for carrying on a respectful correspondence with a man whose pernicious opinions he thought it his duty to expose and confute. Dr. Campbell was beyond all doubt sincere, but he was not indignant. The question, therefore, may to some appear of difficult solution, in what manner the professed enemy of Christianity is to be treated? This has been frequently proposed, but it has not been satisfactorily answered. All will acknowledge that there are certain rules of good manners, the breach of which no controversy can justify; but the mere admission of this will pro-

bably be thought insufficient. There are men likewise who think that we ought to argue for the evidences of religion and the foundations of human happiness, with as much coolness as if the contest related to the niceties of grammar, or the dates of history; but neither will this be admitted as a consistent principle. In all disputes, the warmth, the zeal, the exertions, must rise in proportion to the value of the object contended for; and if the exuberance of the affections be ever pardonable, it must surely be in the case of a man who endeavours to rescue from sophistry and perversion doctrines of eternal importance; and who sees, or thinks he sees, the religion, morals, and happiness of mankind, at stake. Such was certainly the case of our author, and such was his opinion. He says in the abovementioned postscript, "when doctrines are published subversive of morality and religion, doctrines of which I perceive and have it in my power to expose the absurdity, my duty to the public forbids me to be silent; especially when I see that, by the influence of fashion, folly, or more criminal causes, these doctrines spread wider and wider every day, diffusing ignorance, misery, and licentiousness, wherever they prevail."—In this view of his duty, a writer who betrays no warmth, no animated sympathy with his subject, who is courtly in expressing indignation, and shy in exposing danger, must have either been dragged into the contest against his will, or must be indifferent to the issue. The truth is, Mr. Beattie had many opportunities of observing the mischief occasioned by Hume's writings among his countrymen. Hume's fame as a historian contributed not a

little to the popularity of his philosophical works. He was among the first of the eminent class of Scotch *literati*, and a very pardonable bias in favour of one who reflected honour upon the nation, induced many to read and fancy themselves convinced by his Essays and Treatises, who would have had no such pleasure or pride in perusing the works of the most celebrated English or foreign sceptics.

The "Essay on Truth," whatever objections were made to it, and it met with very few public opponents,* had a more extensive circulation than probably any work of the kind ever published. This may be partly attributed to the charms of that popular style in which the author conveyed his sentiments on subjects which his adversaries had artfully disguised in a metaphysical jargon, the meaning of which they could vary at pleasure; but the eagerness with which it was bought up and read, arose chiefly from the just praise bestowed upon it by the most distinguished friends of religion and learning in Great Britain. With many of these, of high rank both in church and state, the author had the pleasing satisfaction of dating his acquaintance from the publication of this work. There appeared, indeed, in the public in general an honourable wish to grace the triumph of sound reasoning over per-

* The principal publication was Dr. Priestley's "Examination of Dr. Reid on the Human Mind; Dr. Beattie on the Nature and Immutability of Truth; and Dr. Oswald's Appeal to Common Sense," Oct. 1775. Dr. Priestley prefers the system of Dr. Hartley, which he was then endeavouring to introduce; but the flippant and sarcastic style he assumed on this occasion was disapproved even by his own friends.

nicious sophistry. Hence in less than four years five large editions of the Essay were sold, and it was translated into several foreign languages, and attracted the notice of many eminent persons in France, Germany, Holland, Italy, and other parts of the continent.

Among other marks of respect, the University of Oxford conferred the degree of Doctor of Laws* on the author, and on his second arrival in London he was most graciously received by his Majesty, who not only bestowed a pension on him, but admitted him to the honour of a private conference. Many years after, when Dr. Beattie went to pay his respects to his Majesty, he was still received with every mark of royal condescension and kindness. In the last, or nearly the last conversation I enjoyed with him, he observed how much he was always surprised with the intelligent remarks and intimate knowledge which his Majesty displayed, not only on general topics of national literature, but even the minute history of what was going on at the Scotch universities.

It was in July 1771 that Dr. Beattie first visited London, and commenced a personal acquaintance with men of the first eminence, with Lord Mansfield and Lord Lyttelton, Drs. Hurd, Porteus, Johnson, Mr. Burke, and, indeed, the whole of the literary society whose conversations have been so plea-

* I believe he had received this honour some time before from King's College, Aberdeen. He was afterwards chosen Member of the Zealand Society of Arts and Sciences, and of the Literary and Philosophical Society of Manchester, and was a Fellow of the Royal Society of Edinburgh; but with the dates of these I am unacquainted.

santly detailed by Mr. Boswell; and returned to Scotland with a mind elevated and cheered by the praise, the kindness, and the patronage, of the good and great. It was, however, on his second visit to London, in 1773, that he received his degree from Oxford, and those honours from his Majesty, which we anticipated as a direct, though not an immediate consequence of the services he rendered to his country by the publication of the "Essay on Truth." His conversation with his Majesty has been variously reported; some parts he incidentally related to his friends, but these have descended to us in a very incorrect state.

Although Dr. Beattie has apparently withdrawn his claims as a poet, by cancelling as many copies of his juvenile attempts as he could procure, he was not so inconscious of his admirable talents, as to relinquish what was an early and favourite pursuit, and in which he had probably passed some of his most delightful hours. A few months after the appearance of the "Essay on Truth," he published the "First Book of the MINSTREL," in 4to. but without his name. By this omission, the poem was examined with all that rigour of criticism which may be expected in the case of a work, for which the author's name can neither afford protection or apology. He was accordingly praised for having adopted the measure of Spenser, because he had the happy enthusiasm of that writer to support and render it agreeable; but objections were made to the limitation of his plan to the *profession* of the Minstrel, when so much superior interest might be excited by carrying him on through the practice of it. It was objected also, that

the sentiment of the first stanza appeared too close a copy from a passage in Gray's celebrated Elegy; and several lines were pointed out as unequal, and inconsistent with the general measure, or with the dignity of the subject.

These objections appear to have coincided with the author's re-consideration; and he not only adopted various alterations recommended by his friends, but introduced others, which made the subsequent editions of this poem far more perfect than the first. Of the original preface he retained so little, that an exact copy of it may not be unacceptable to our readers, as the old editions of the Minstrel are become very rare.

"The first hint of this performance was suggested by Dr. Percey's ingenious Essay on the English Minstrels, prefixed to his first volume of Reliques of Ancient English Poetry.

"My design was to trace the progress of a poetical genius, born in a rude and illiterate age, from the first dawnings of fancy and reason, till that period in which he may be supposed capable of supporting the character of a MINSTREL, that is, of an itinerant poet and musician:—a character which, according to the notions of our forefathers, was not only respectable but sacred. A poetical illustration of such a subject seemed to promise variety of amusement, and even some topics of instruction both moral and philosophical. Perhaps I mistook it, as well as my own abilities: however, in making a trial there could not be much harm. My friends are pleased with what I have done; but, as they cannot entirely acquit themselves of partiality, advise me to lay a specimen before the public.

"The pursuits and amusements of the Minstrel's childhood and early youth are described in this First Book; which, if the title were altered, and a few phrases struck out that refer to a sequel, might perhaps be considered as a sort of whole by itself. The incidents that qualify him for his profession, and determine him to enter upon it, will furnish materials for the books that are to follow. If this be honoured with the public approbation, I shall think it has merit sufficient to justify my bestowing some time in finishing what remains, which is already in great forwardness. Should it be unsuccessful, I will, with no great concern, relinquish a scheme which cannot be completed without such expence of time and thought as a person in my way of life cannot easily spare. If, as the critics tell us, the chief end of poetry is to please, surely the man who writes verses with some inconvenience to himself, and without any pleasure to the public, spends his time to very little purpose.

"I have endeavoured to imitate Spenser, not in his allegory or antiquated dialect, which, though graceful in him, appear sometimes aukward in modern writers, but in the measure and harmony of his verse, and in the simplicity and variety of his composition. All antiquated expressions I have studiously avoided; admitting, however, some old words, where they seemed peculiarly suitable to the subject: but I hope none will be found that are now obsolete, or in any degree unintelligible to a reader of English poetry.

"To those who may be disposed to ask, what could induce me to write in so difficult a measure, I can only answer, that

it pleases my ear, and seems from its gothic structure and original to bear some relation to the subject and spirit of the poem. It admits both simplicity and magnificence of sound and language, beyond any other stanza that I am acquainted with. It allows the sententiousness of the couplet, and something too of the diversified cadence and complicated modulation of blank verse. What some of our critics have remarked of its uniformity growing at last tiresome to the ear, will be found to hold true, only when the poetry is faulty in other respects."

The Minstrel, however, in its first form, contained so many passages of genuine poetry, the poetry of nature and of feeling, and was so eagerly applauded by those whose right of opinion was incontestible, that it soon ran through four editions; and in 1774 the author produced the "Second Book." This, although of a more philosophical cast, and less luxurious in those descriptions which appeal to every heart, yet contained such noble imagery, and so many proofs of the "lively, plastic imagination," as to place the author in the first rank of modern poets. As the success of the Second Book was not inferior to that of the first, it was the general wish that the author would fulfil his promise by completing the interesting subject. I believe he fully intended this; but the increasing business of education, the cares of a family, and the state of his health, originally delicate, and never robust, deprived him of the time and thought which he considered as requisite. In 1777, however, he was induced to publish the two parts of the Minstrel together, and to add a few of his juvenile poems. In his ad-

vertisement he informs us, that "they are all of which he is willing to be considered as the author." Some poems about this time had been ascribed to him which he never wrote; and those pieces which he wished to consign to oblivion, had been published by persons who hoped to profit by the now established fame of the author.*

During the preceding year, 1776, he prepared for the press a new edition of the "Essay on Truth," in a more splendid form than it had hitherto appeared in, and attended with circumstances of public esteem which were very flattering. These will be best understood in his own modest advertisement.

"About three years ago some persons of distinction in England, who had honoured me with their friendship, were pleased to express a desire that the ESSAY on TRUTH should be printed in a more splendid form than that in which it had hitherto appeared; and so as to ensure profit, as well as honour, to the author. And the proprietors of the copyright, being at the same time applied to, declared their willingness to permit an edition to be printed for his advantage, on his agreeing to certain terms, which were thought reasonable.

"It was then proposed that a new edition of the ESSAY should be printed in quarto, by subscription. To this the author had some objections; he was apprehensive that the size of that work might be inadequate to such a purpose. Besides,

* In 1780 a spurious edition appeared of his Juvenile Poems, with some which he never wrote, from Dodsley's Collection. This volume he disowned in a public advertisement. Even the publishers' names were spurious.

to publish in this manner a book which had already gone through two or three editions, seemed hazardous, because unprecedented; and might, to those who were uninformed of the affair, give ground to suspect the author of an infirmity, which no person who knows him will ever lay to his charge, an excessive love of money.

"It was answered, that the volume might be extended to a sufficiency of size, by printing, along with that ON TRUTH, some other ESSAYS, which, though not originally designed for the press, his friends, who had seen them, were pleased to think not unworthy of it; and that the proposed subscription, being of a peculiar kind, should be conducted in a peculiar manner. 'It shall never,' said the promoters of the undertaking, 'be committed to booksellers, nor made public by advertisements; nobody shall be *solicited* to join in it; we, by ourselves and our friends, shall carry it on, without giving you any further trouble, than just to signify your consent, and prepare your materials;—and if there be, as we have reason to think there are, many persons of worth and fortune who wish for such an opportunity as this will afford them, to testify their approbation of you and your writings, it would seem capricious in you to deprive them of that satisfaction, and yourself of so great an honour.'

"To a proposal so uncommonly generous the author could not refuse his consent, without giving himself airs which would not have become him. He therefore thankfully acquiesced, &c."

The subscription-money was a guinea, but I am not certain

that subscribers were limited to that sum. The list of subscribers amounted to four hundred and seventy-six names of men and women of the first rank in life, and of all the distinguished literary characters of the time. The copies subscribed for amounted to seven hundred and thirty-two, so that no inconsiderable sum must have accrued in this delicate manner to the author. Dr. Beattie was by no means rich; his pension was only two hundred pounds, and the annual amount of his professorship, I have reason to think, never reached that sum.

The Essays added to this volume, and which he afterwards printed separately in octavo, were "On Poetry and Music;" on "Laughter and ludicrous Composition;" and "on the Utility of Classical Learning." They were written many years before publication, and besides being read in a private literary society, had been submitted to the judgment of his learned friends in England, who recommended them to the press. In ordinary cases this advice has no value, because it is a matter of course; but Dr. Beattie could have discerned flattery had it been offered him, and was too good a critic to be deceived by the common-place returns to such applications. His friends, however, in this instance, only anticipated the praises of a more numerous class, to whom his Essays appeared to discover a taste and style formed and improved on the chastest models, and to be remarkable for elegance, correctness, and sound judgment. The first, which was written in 1762, when the author had only reached his twenty-seventh year, evinces a great fund of reading, and such acquaintance with ancient and modern learning, and such discrimination in objects of

criticism, as are rarely found in persons of that age. He is particularly happy in his illustrations; and as he had no new theories to advance, and no paradoxes to catch applause at the expence of established truths, perhaps there are few books that may with more safety be placed in the hands of a young man to regulate his taste, and direct him in the study of polite literature. This opinion, which belongs more particularly to the first two of these Essays, may yet be applied to the third, where we have an important question in education discussed with logical precision, and with a force of argument which it will be difficult to answer. It is, however, still more pleasing to remark that in these as well as in his next work, he never fails to introduce into questions of taste allusions to those subjects of piety and morals, of which, as a teacher of youth, he never lost sight, and was eager to inculcate.

For the frequent introduction of practical and serious observations, he offers a satisfactory reason in the preface to "Dissertations Moral and Critical, on Memory and Imagination; on Dreaming; the Theory of Language; on Fable and Romance; on the Attachments of Kindred; and Illustrations on Sublimity," 4to. 1783. These, he informs us, were at first composed in a different form, being part of a course of prelections read to those young gentlemen whom it was his business to initiate in the elements of moral science; and he disclaims any nice metaphysical theories, or other matters of doubtful disputation, as not suiting his ideas of moral teaching. Nor was this the disgust of a metaphysician "retired from business." He had ever been of the same opinion. In

a letter to his friend Gray, dated March 30, 1767, he says, "It is a fault common to almost all our Scotch authors, that they are too metaphysical. I wish they would learn to speak more to the heart and less to the understanding; but alas! this is a talent which heaven only can bestow: whereas a philosophical spirit (as we call it) is merely artificial, and level with the capacity of every man who has much patience, a little learning, and no taste." Dr. Beattie's aim was, indeed, in all lectures, "to inure young minds to habits of attentive observation; to guard them against the influence of bad principles; and to set before them such views of nature, and such plain and practical truths, as may at once improve the heart and the understanding, and amuse and elevate the fancy."*

Of these Essays, the preference has been generally given to

* Cowper's praise of this volume, which I have seen since the above was written, is too valuable to be omitted—"Beattie, the most agreeable and amiable writer I ever met with; the only author I have seen whose critical and philosophical researches are diversified and embellished by a poetical imagination, that makes even the driest subject, and the leanest, a feast for an epicure in books. He is so much at his ease too, that his own character appears in every page, and, which is very rare, we see not only the writer, but the man; and the man so gentle, so well tempered, so happy in his religion, and so humane in his philosophy, that it is necessary to love him if one has any sense of what is lovely." *Hayley's Life of Cowper*, vol. iii. p. 247.—In a letter I received from Dr. Beattie, a few weeks before the appearance of the Dissertations, he says, "I am very doubtful of their success, very doubtful indeed, however it is now too late to perplex myself on that head—a great deal is added, and a very great deal corrected since I———— to have you in my little auditory."

those on "Memory and Imagination," and on "Fable and Romance," and to "The Theory of Language." In re-publishing the latter separately for the use of seminaries of education, he complied with the wish of many readers and critics. In all these Essays, his elegant and pertinent remarks, forcible illustrations, and occasional anecdotes and digressions, afford a variety and pleasure in the perusal which are rarely to be expected from the discussion of such subjects, when the writer's object is to surprise by paradoxical assertions, and at whatever expence of truth and sense, to obtain the praise due to original theory. It is by this affectation of new discoveries that so many late writers have become either unintelligible or pernicious.

During a visit to the metropolis in 1784, Dr. Beattie submitted to the present Bishop of London, with whose friendship he had long been honoured, a part of a work which at that excellent prelate's desire he published in 1786, entitled "Evidences of the Christian Religion briefly and plainly stated," 2 vols. 12mo. This likewise formed part of his concluding lectures to his class, and he generally dictated an abstract of it to them in the course of the session. From a work of this kind, and on a subject which had employed the pens of the greatest and best English writers, much novelty was not to be expected, nor in its original form was any novelty intended. It must be allowed, however, that he has placed many of the arguments for the evidences of Christianity in a very striking and persuasive light, and it is not too much to suppose that if he could have devoted more time and study to a com-

plete review and arrangement of what had, or might be advanced on these evidences, he would have produced a work worthy of his genius, and worthy of the grandeur and importance of the subject.* It is highly honourable to the present age, that so many attempts were made to supply this defect, when the contemptuous and contemptible sophistry and perversions of infidelity threatened to introduce among us the miseries they had too successfully brought on the continent of Europe.

In the preface to Dr. Beattie's "Dissertations," he intimated a design of publishing the whole of his Lectures on Moral Science, but from this he was diverted by the cogent reasons there assigned. He was encouraged, however, to present to the public, in a correct and somewhat enlarged form, the abstract which he used to dictate to his scholars. Accordingly, in 1790, he published "Elements of Moral Science," vol. i. 8vo. including psychology, or perceptive faculties and active powers; and natural theology; with two appendixes on the incorporeal nature and on the Immortality of the Soul. The second volume was published in 1793; containing ethics, economics, politics, and logic. All these subjects are necessarily treated in a summary manner; but it will be found sufficiently comprehensive, not only for a text-book, or book of elements, which was the professed intention of the author, but also as an excellent aid to the general reader who may not

* In a letter which I received from Dr. Beattie, dated March 26, 1786, he says of his "Evidences"—"In closeness of matter and style I should not scruple to prefer (this work) to any of my other things."

have an opportunity of attending regular lectures, and yet wishes to reap some of the advantages of regular education. To the religious, moral or literary opinions occasionally interspersed, it will not be easy to find an objection; and in this, as in his former works, his peculiar excellence lies in exposing the sophistries of modern philosophy, sometimes by the argumentative process, and sometimes by shewing how incapable and unworthy they are of any serious refutation.

In vol. ii. there occurs a dissertation against the Slave Trade, which the author informs us he wrote in 1778 with a view to a separate publication, and of this it is still worthy. He has exposed the weak defences set up for that abominable traffic with wonderful acuteness, and upon the whole appears to me to be unanswerable in his main positions.

These "Elements" have not had the success of some of his other works, yet I should be inclined to prefer them to all in point of utility. It were to be wished, however, that the work had been accompanied by an index, and by that pathetic lecture with which he was accustomed to conclude his course. He has also omitted the list of books on subjects treated in his lectures, which he dictated to his scholars. This list, indeed, would now perhaps appear very imperfect, although his criticisms on books were always valuable; but he had so much more pleasure in praise than in censure, that in his essays and dissertations and in his lectures he expatiated chiefly on those authors of whom he could speak with delight, and whom he could recommend as models of elegant taste and pure morals. It was one of his parting exhortations to his scholars to "read no bad books, as the world afforded more good ones than

they could ever have leisure to read with the attention they deserved."

To the second volume of the Transactions of the Royal Society of Edinburgh, published in 1790,* he contributed "Remarks on some Passages of the Sixth Book of the Æneid." This was, in fact, a dissertation on the mythology of the Romans, as poetically described by Virgil, in the episode of the descent of Æneas into hell; and the author's object was to vindicate his favourite poet from the charges of impiety, &c. brought against him by Warburton and others. In the same year he is said to have superintended an edition of "Addison's periodical Papers," published at Edinburgh in 4 vols. 8vo. To this, however, he contributed only a few notes to Tickell's Life of Addison, and to Dr. Johnson's remarks. It were to be wished he had done more. Addison never had a warmer admirer, nor a more successful imitator. He always recommended Addison's style to his pupils, and it is evident from the whole of his works that it was his own model. No man in our times has imitated the chaste simplicity and perspicuity for which Addison is distinguished with such palpable success. I know that he "gave his days and nights to Addison," and it was by this that he attained an English style "familiar but not coarse, and elegant but not ostentatious."

* About the year 1778 he printed a Letter to Dr. Blair "On the Improvement of Psalmody in Scotland." This was only privately circulated. It contained, if I remember right, a few specimens of translations of the Psalms. He printed also some years after a list of Scotticisms, for the use of his students. These he used to make them transcribe; but in this list are some expressions which in my MS. copy of his Lectures when he borrowed it of me in 1778, he altered to *English barbarisms*.

In his remarks on the character of Sir Roger de Coverley, he has fallen into the same mistake with Johnson, in supposing that that character was sketched or begun by Addison. This has long been a popular error, or, in Drs. Johnson and Beattie, an oversight, which might have been avoided by consulting Tickell's edition of Addison's works. Addison certainly wrote some of the best papers in which the knight's adventures are related; but the original outline belongs incontestibly to Steele.

In 1794 appeared the last work our author composed, and its history requires some notice of his family. In 1766 he married Miss Mary Dun, daughter of Dr. James Dun, rector or head master of the grammar school of Aberdeen, a man of great personal worth, and an excellent classical scholar. He had been either a teacher or rector of that school above half a century, and will be long remembered by his numerous pupils, as one who united the dignity of the master to the suavity of the parent.

With this lady Dr. Beattie enjoyed for many years as much felicity as the married state can add; and when she visited London with him, she shared amply in the respect paid to him, and in the esteem of his illustrious friends. By her he had two sons, James *Hay*, so named from the Earl of Errol, one of his old and steady friends; and *Montague*, from the celebrated Mrs. Montague, in whose house Dr. Beattie frequently resided when in London. While these children were very young, Mrs. Beattie was seized with an indisposition, which, in spite of all care and skill terminated in the painful necessity of separation from her husband. The care of the children now entirely devolved on the father, whose sensibility received such a shock

from the melancholy circumstance alluded to, as could only be aggravated by an apprehension that the consequences of Mrs. Beattie's disorder might not be confined to herself. This alarm, which often preyed on his spirits, proved happily without foundation. His children grew up without the smallest appearance of the hereditary evil; but when they had just begun to repay his care by a display of early genius, sweetness of temper, and filial affection, he was compelled to resign them both to an untimely grave. His eldest son died November 19, 1790, in his twenty-second year; and his youngest on March 14, 1796, in his eighteenth year. The death of the latter was occasioned by a rapid fever. The suddenness of the shock made it more deeply felt by the father, as he had not yet recovered from the loss of the eldest, who was taken from him by the slow process of consumption.

Soon after the death of James Hay, his father drew up an account of his "Life and Character;" to which were added, "Essays and Fragments," written by this extraordinary youth. Of this volume a few copies only were printed, and were given as "presents to those friends with whom the author was particularly acquainted or connected." Dr. Beattie was afterwards induced to permit the Life and some of the Essays and Fragments to be printed for publication, and being mostly poetical, they now form a companion-volume to his own poems. The life is perhaps one of the most interesting and affecting narratives in our language. It is written with great simplicity of style, and with so much impartiality in those passages where praise or censure can have admittance, that there is probably no reader of whatever judgment who would not rather sub-

scribe to his opinion than exert the privilege of criticism. It is impossible, indeed, to contemplate without emotion the exquisite tenderness of an affectionate and mourning parent, soothing himself by the remembrance of filial piety and departed excellence; and humbly, yet fondly, endeavouring to engage the sympathies of the world in behalf of a genius that might have proved one of its brightest ornaments.

After the loss of this amiable youth, who had been appointed successor to his father, and had occasionally lectured in the professor's chair, Dr. Beattie resumed that employment himself, and continued it, although with intervals of sickness and depression, until the unexpected death of his second and last child, in 1796. His hopes of a successor, of his name and family, had probably been revived in this youth, who exhibited many proofs of early genius, and for some time before his death had prosecuted his studies with great assiduity. But here too he was compelled again to subscribe to the uncertainty of all human prospects. Great, however, as the affliction was, it would be pleasing to be able to add that he acquiesced with pious resignation, and laid hold on the hopes he knew so well how to recommend, and which, yet might have cheered if not gladdened his declining life. But from this period he began to withdraw from society, and brooded over the sorrows of his family, until they overpowered his feelings, and abstracted him from all the comforts of friendship and all power of consolation. The last three years of his life were passed in hopeless solitude, and he even dropt his correspondence with those remote friends with whom he had long enjoyed the soothing interchange of elegant sentiment and

friendly attachment. His health, in this voluntary confinement, gradually decayed, and extreme and premature debility, without any acute disorder, terminated his good and useful life, on the 18th day of August 1803. His reputation was so well founded and so extensive, that he was universally lamented as a loss to the republic of letters, and particularly to the university to which he had been so long a public benefactor and an honour.

Of his general character a fair estimate may be formed from his works, and it is no small praise that his life and writings were in strict conformity. No man ever felt more strong impressions of the value of the virtues he recommended than Dr. Beattie. Although he disdained the affectation of feeling, and the ostentation of extraordinary purity, he yet more abhorred the character of those writers whose professions and practice are at variance. His zeal for religious and moral truth, however censured by those to whom religion and truth are adverse, originated in a mind fully convinced of the importance of what he prescribed to others, and anxious to display, where such a display was neither obtrusive nor boastful, that his conviction was sincere, and his practice resolute.

It may not be amiss in this place to take some notice of a slander which the friends, at least the injudicious ones, of Hume have been industrious to propagate, because, if true, it would have proved a littleness of mind of which none who knew Dr. Beattie could accuse him. It has been said that he submitted his juvenile poems to Mr. Hume, at that time considered as the arbiter of taste, who either returned them with severe censure, or spoke of them with contempt, and that this was the

real motive which prompted Dr. Beattie to write the "Essay on Truth." Such is the story; and whoever compares the provocation with the revenge, will not think it very probable. It is the part of malignity itself to search painfully for one bad motive where so many good ones are at hand. Nothing surely can be more false or absurd than this piece of slander. If Mr. Hume criticised Dr. Beattie's poetry with severity, which may be admitted, he certainly could not have been a more rigid censor than the author himself. Dr. Beattie, almost as soon as his volume of early poems was published, and while the praises of every friend and of many strangers were yet sounding in his ears, suppressed the farther publication, and endeavoured to recover the copies that had been circulated; and for many years refused all applications to reprint the few articles in our present volume, and that with the utmost pertinacity. The presumption therefore must be, either that he originally thought as slightingly of those poems as Mr. Hume, or that Mr. Hume had brought him over to his opinion. In either case there could be no such breach of friendship, and surely no such indignant recollection as to provoke the "Essay on Truth." The fact will be acknowledged by all who had personal intimacy with Dr. Beattie, and they only can be the proper judges of his feelings, that it was not the severity of criticism that he at any time dreaded or avoided. In Gray, who was his intimate friend and correspondent, he found a critic whose opinions might have mortified the vanity of the most conceited of youthful poets. On one occasion, indeed, Gray placed the dangers of poetry before his eyes in such a striking light that he appeared willing to renounce the muses

altogether.* Such was our author's diffidence in all his productions, that he ventured nothing without consulting his friends, and received very few proposals of correction in which he did not acquiesce. If with this humble and respectful disposition Mr. Hume insulted his feelings, or wished to discourage the early attempts of genius, although his conduct might not provoke the "Essay on Truth," it forms a part of his character on which his friends ought to be silent, unless they can explain it in a more satisfactory manner.

As a poet, it must be confessed that Dr. Beattie came slowly into the world; he did not astonish in his days of childhood and ignorance, by those wonderful efforts which speak the extraordinary teachings of nature. That he had a talent for poetry will not be denied, but it was a talent to be cultivated, and in this respect he has not differed from the most eminent names on the list of English poets. "To touch and re-touch," says Cowper, "although some writers boast of negligence, and others would be ashamed to show their foul copies, is the secret of almost all good writing, especially in verse." Dr. Beattie was a poet without self-love and without conceit, and his fame might be safely trusted in his own hands. What he wrote, and at whatever period of his life, he was able to criticise with impartiality and with taste. He had an eye rather to future than to present reputation, and so far was he from soliciting the complimentary opinions of friends, that I suspect he did not rate very highly the judgment of those who had praised the early productions of his muse. It is certain that he suppressed those poems, in defiance of their suffrages; and,

* Mason's Life of Gray, p. 319. edit. 4to. 1775.

until he was encouraged to publish "The Minstrel," never, in his own opinion, had laid a fair claim to the reputation of a poet. The many "touchings and retouchings" he made in this excellent poem are no inconsiderable proofs of his judgment and his diffidence, for he frequently corrected that which all who then distributed the rewards of fame considered as perfect.

As a philosopher, it is no deduction from his merit that his celebrated Essay is now little read. It rose to higher reputation in its day than any work of the kind ever published; and the little opposition made to it is a proof that it answered the full purpose of the author. His expectations, indeed, were moderate; he knew that in controversy it is more easy to gain the victory than to impose terms on the vanquished. Hume, we are told, remained silent, in consequence of a resolution he had formed, not to answer any opponent; and after declining all notice of Dr. Campbell, whose superiority, in his "Essay on Miracles," has never been disputed, it was not to be supposed he would break his engagement in favour of Dr. Beattie. But that he felt the attack is generally acknowledged, for this was the first time that the sophistry of his general system had been detected in a popular manner, and the absurdity as well as the mischief accruing from his principles fairly laid open. As to the French philosophers, whom our author incidentally noticed, it was not their object at that time to provoke a public controversy. They were effecting their purpose by surer means, and Dr. Beattie lived to see their principles triumphant in the destruction of religion, humanity, and social order.

Infidel writings have been obtruded on the world at diffe-

rent periods, and after having been set to rest for a time, have again been revived to serve new purposes. But on these revivals, it does not always happen that the controversial works of one period will supply the wants of the next. New means of attack require new means of defence. The infidel publications which appeared about the conclusion of the last century, were, in substance, mere transcripts of those which appeared at the beginning of it. But style was altered, and cunning assumed new shapes; a new class of men were to be influenced, and what once was confined to the speculations of the learned, was now to be adapted to a certain weak and feverish state of mind among the vulgar; until at length the controversy seemed to be taken entirely out of the hands of men of literature, and placed in those of mechanics and paupers. The blasphemies of Paine might have sunk into contempt, had they not been circulated, with liberal industry, among those who could read, but could not think, and who wanted a palliative to their conscience, or a screen to their profligacy. To debauch the minds of the lower classes was the last effort of the last race of infidels, and the suppression of them necessarily devolved on the civil magistrate.

But whatever reputation Dr. Beattie enjoyed from his philosophical and critical works, his praise was yet higher in all the personal relations of public and private life. His excellence as an instructor may be gathered from his printed works; but it remains to be added, that few men have exceeded him in anxious and kind attentions to his pupils. It was his practice, while under his care, to invite them by small parties to his house, and unbend his mind in gay conversation, encou-

raging them to speak with familiarity on common topics, and to express their doubts with freedom on any subjects connected with their studies. Those whom he observed particularly regular and attentive in the class, and who by their answers or remarks discovered the improvements of private assiduity, he honoured with his kindest patronage, and corresponded on easy and friendly terms with many of them, long after they quitted the university. By these means he was so endeared to his scholars, that I am not able to mention him at all as a disciplinarian. I can recollect no instance in which he found it necessary to command attention by any influence more strong than the reverence which his character and manners procured without any effort, and continued without any abatement.

As a husband and father, if he had any fault, it was that of extreme tenderness and sensibility. He was indeed "tremblingly alive" to every circumstance that affected the objects of his love. Yet who will arraign these feelings, or set bounds to parental care? The danger, let it be remembered, was all his own: his children betrayed none of the wayward consequences of indulgence; they amply repaid his anxious fondness, and he derived a pleasure from their advancement, which was very remote from the unsteady caprice of parental weakness. The talents of his eldest son, as they were cultivated chiefly in retirement, were not generally known; but those with whom he associated knew him for a youth of wonderful innocence, purity and simplicity of mind and manner. Nor was his brother, of whom however I knew less from personal acquaintance, inferior in the valuable qualities of the

heart. On them, therefore, the father's fondness produced none of the consequences of an affection which in many is rather a weakness than a virtue. He was himself the only sufferer by his excess of sensibility; and we must ever lament that it embittered those years which good men usually pass in cheerful remembrances, and exemplary resignation.

None were more affected by his melancholy retreat from society, than those who could recollect him in his happier days of health and hope. As a companion, few men exhibited more captivations. From his assiduous application to study, and the time he found it necessary to devote to his published works and to his academical duties, it may easily be supposed he could not spare many hours to company. Yet he had a keen relish for social intercourse, and was remarkably cheerful and communicative. It has not yet been mentioned, but it may be observed from various parts of his writings, that he had a turn for humour, and a quick sense of the ridiculous. This, however, was so chastened by the elegance of his taste, and the benevolence of his disposition, that whatever fell from him of that kind was devoid of coarseness or asperity. In conversation he never endeavoured to gain superiority, or to compel attention, but contrived to take his just share, without seeming to interrupt the loquacity of others. He had, however, what most men have who are jealous of their reputation, a degree of reserve in promiscuous company, which he entirely discarded among those whom he loved, and in whom he confided. Among strangers, too, there was a studied correctness in his expression, which was either unnecessary, or appeared more easy and natural, in his familiar hours.

Of his talent for humour, he gave some specimens in a periodical journal published at Aberdeen, which seem not unworthy of being added to his miscellaneous works, if they could be ascertained; but he did not seek the reputation of a wit, and I am not sure that he permitted his name to transpire. In London, it is yet remembered that his conversation-talents were much admired, and no doubt procured him a long continuance of those friendships with men of rank, which are rarely to be preserved without something more than the mere possession of genius. His modest and engaging manners rendered him equally acceptable to the courtly and elegant Mansfield, and to the rough and unbending Johnson. To Mrs. Montague's literary parties he was ever a most acceptable addition; and he lived with the present Bishop of London, with Sir Joshua Reynolds, and with Mr. Burke, on terms of the easiest intimacy. If flattery could have spoiled him, he had enough, as in England, for whatever reason, his character always stood higher than in his own country.*

Dr. Beattie's person was rather above the middle size. His countenance was very mild, and his smile uncommonly placid and benign. His eyes were remarkably piercing and expressive, and there was a general composure in his features which Sir Joshua Reynolds has given so admirably in his picture, that I recommended the head to be copied for the present edition, in preference to those which represent him in more advanced life.

His person was apparently stout and even robust, but this certainly was not the case. Its original conformation may

* There is another character in which the public will be glad to be informed Dr. Beattie will soon appear, that of an epistolary writer. His correspondence is now preparing for the press by one of his much esteemed and most valuable friends.

have been that of strength and vigour; but he had frequent interruptions from sickness at a very early period of life. As he advanced, he discovered all the delicate and valetudinary temperament of genius. At the age of forty-five he had the walk and manner and precautions that are usually observable at sixty, and was much afflicted with head-aches and other symptoms that are commonly called nervous. When I saw him on his last visit to London, he seemed painfully affected by sudden noises of any kind, and was particularly averse to the bustle of the London streets. There was evidently a great portion of irritability in his habit. That this was precipitated by the loss of his domestic endearments cannot be doubted; but the primary cause must be sought in his application to study, which at all times of his life, but particularly in his youth, was too close, and absolutely inconsistent with a healthy habit of body. Of this he was so sensible, that it appears to have been his constant object to prevent his son from falling into the same error; and I received some letters from him many years ago on the subject, in which he strongly deprecates an unremitting attention to books.

I have thus given the facts of Dr. Beattie's literary life, and public services, and have attempted to sketch his personal character, the latter, perhaps, some may observe, with a friendly hand. I know not, however, in what other manner to execute what has been intrusted to me. I revere him as an ornament to his country; I remember him with the tenderest affection as my tutor and my friend. The press is open to those who would expose his failings; I have endeavoured to recollect them, but cannot.

A. C.

PREFACE

TO

THE MINSTREL.

THE design was, to trace the progress of a Poetical Genius, born in a rude age, from the first dawning of fancy and reason, till that period at which he may be supposed capable of appearing in the world as a MINSTREL, that is, as an itinerant Poet and Musician;—a character which, according to the notions of our forefathers, was not only respectable, but sacred.

I have endeavoured to imitate SPENCER in the measure of his verse, and in the harmony, simplicity, and variety of his composition. Antique expressions I have avoided; admitting, however, some old words, where they seemed to suit the subject: but I hope none will be found that are now obsolete, or in any degree not intelligible to a reader of English poetry.

To those, who may be disposed to ask, what could induce me to write in so difficult a measure, I can only answer, that it pleases my ear, and seems, from its Gothic structure and original, to bear some relation to the subject and spirit of the Poem. It admits both simplicity and magnificence of sound and of language, beyond any other stanza that I am acquainted with. It allows the sententiousness of the couplet, as well as the more complex modulation of blank verse. What some critics have remarked, of its uniformity growing at last tiresome to the ear, will be found to hold true, only when the Poetry is faulty in other respects.

To face the first page of the Poem.

C. H. Bunbury del. J. Fittler sculp.

Listning with pleasing dread to the deep roar
Of the wide-weltering waves. ——

Minstrel. Book I. ver. LIV.

Published June 1, 1809, by J. Mawman, London.

THE

MINSTREL:

OR,

THE PROGRESS OF GENIUS.

BOOK I.

THE

MINSTREL:

OR,

THE PROGRESS OF GENIUS.

BOOK I.

1

AH! who can tell how hard it is to climb
The steep where Fame's proud temple shines afar;
Ah! who can tell how many a soul sublime
Has felt the influence of malignant star,
And waged with Fortune an eternal war;
Check'd by the scoff of Pride, by Envy's frown,
And Poverty's unconquerable bar,
In life's low vale remote has pined alone,
Then dropt into the grave, unpitied and unknown!

2

And yet the languor of inglorious days,
Not equally oppressive is to all:
Him, who ne'er listen'd to the voice of praise,
The silence of neglect can ne'er appal.
There are, who, deaf to mad Ambition's call,
Would shrink to hear th' obstreperous trump of Fame;
Supremely blest, if to their portion fall
Health, competence, and peace. Nor higher aim
Had He, whose simple tale these artless lines proclaim.

3

The rolls of fame I will not now explore;
Nor need I here describe, in learned lay,
How forth THE MINSTREL far'd in days of yore,
Right glad of heart, though homely in array;
His waving locks and beard all hoary grey:
While from his bending shoulder, decent hung
His harp, the sole companion of his way,
Which to the whistling wild responsive rung:
And ever as he went some merry lay he sung.

4

Fret not thyself, thou glittering child of pride,
That a poor Villager inspires my strain;
With thee let Pageantry and Power abide:
The gentle Muses haunt the sylvan reign;
Where through wild groves at eve the lonely swain
Enraptured roams, to gaze on Nature's charms.
They hate the sensual, and scorn the vain,
The parasite their influence never warms,
Nor him whose sordid soul the love of gold alarms.

5

Though richest hues the peacock's plumes adorn,
Yet horror screams from his discordant throat.
Rise, sons of harmony, and hail the morn,
While warbling larks on russet pinions float:
Or seek at noon the woodland scene remote,
Where the grey linnets carol from the hill.
O let them ne'er, with artificial note,
To please a tyrant, strain the little bill,
But sing what Heaven inspires, and wander where they will.

6

Liberal, not lavish, is kind Nature's hand;
Nor was perfection made for man below.
Yet all her schemes with nicest art are plann'd,
Good counteracting ill, and gladness wo.
With gold and gems if Chilian mountains glow;
If bleak and barren Scotia's hills arise;
There plague and poison, lust and rapine grow;
Here peaceful are the vales, and pure the skies,
And freedom fires the soul, and sparkles in the eyes.

7

Then grieve not, thou, to whom th' indulgent Muse
Vouchsafes a portion of celestial fire:
Nor blame the partial Fates, if they refuse
Th' imperial banquet, and the rich attire.
Know thine own worth, and reverence the lyre.
Wilt thou debase the heart which God refin'd?
No; let thy heaven-taught soul to heaven aspire,
To fancy, freedom, harmony, resign'd;
Ambition's groveling crew for ever left behind.

8

Canst thou forego the pure ethereal soul
In each fine sense so exquisitely keen,
On the dull couch of Luxury to loll,
Stung with disease, and stupefied with spleen;
Fain to implore the aid of Flattery's screen,
Even from thyself thy loathsome heart to hide,
(The mansion then no more of joy serene),
Where fear, distrust, malevolence, abide,
And impotent desire, and disappointed pride?

9

O how canst thou renounce the boundless store
Of charms which Nature to her votary yields!
The warbling woodland, the resounding shore,
The pomp of groves, and garniture of fields;
All that the genial ray of morning gilds,
And all that echoes to the song of even,
All that the mountain's sheltering bosom shields,
And all the dread magnificence of heaven,
O how canst thou renounce, and hope to be forgiven?

10

These charms shall work thy soul's eternal health,
And love, and gentleness, and joy, impart.
But these thou must renounce, if lust of wealth
E'er win it's way to thy corrupted heart:
For ah! it poisons like a scorpion's dart;
Prompting th' ungenerous wish, the selfish scheme,
The stern resolve unmov'd by pity's smart,
The troublous day, and long distressful dream,
Return my roving Muse, resume thy purposed theme.

11

There lived in Gothick days, as legends tell,
A shepherd-swain, a man of low degree;
Whose sires, perchance, in Faryland might dwell,
Sicilian groves, or vales of Arcady;
But he, I ween, was of the north countrie*;
A nation fam'd for song, and beauty's charms;
Zealous, yet modest; innocent, though free;
Patient of toil; serene amidst alarms;
Inflexible in faith; invincible in arms.

* There is hardly an ancient ballad, or romance, wherein a Minstrel or a Harper appears, but he is characterised, by way of eminence, to have been "*of the north countrie.*" It is probable,

12

The shepherd-swain of whom I mention made,
On Scotia's mountains fed his little flock;
The sickle, scythe, or plough, he never sway'd;
An honest heart was almost all his stock;
His drink the living water from the rock:
The milky dams supplied his board, and lent
Their kindly fleece to baffle winter's shock;
And he, though oft with dust and sweat besprent,
Did guide and guard their wanderings, wheresoe'er they went.

13

From labour health, from health contentment springs:
Contentment opes the source of every joy.
He envied not, he never thought of, kings;
Nor from those appetites sustain'd annoy,
That chance may frustrate, or indulgence cloy:
Nor Fate his calm and humble hopes beguiled;
He mourned no recreant friend, nor mistress coy,
For on his vows the blameless Phœbe smiled,
And her alone he loved, and loved her from a child

that under this appellation were formerly comprehended all the provinces to the north of the Trent." *See Percy's Essay on the English Minstrels.*

14

No jealousy their dawn of love o'ercast,
Nor blasted were their wedded days with strife;
Each season look'd delightful as it past,
To the fond husband, and the faithful wife.
Beyond the lowly vale of shepherd life
They never roam'd; secure beneath the storm
Which in Ambition's lofty land is rife,
Where peace and love are canker'd by the worm
Of pride, each bud of joy industrious to deform.

15

The wight, whose tale these artless lines unfold,
Was all the offspring of this humble pair:
His birth no oracle or seer foretold;
No prodigy appear'd in earth or air,
Nor aught that might a strange event declare.
You guess each circumstance of EDWIN's birth;
The parent's transport, and the parent's care;
The gossip's prayer for wealth, and wit, and worth;
And one long summer-day of indolence and mirth.

16

And yet poor Edwin was no vulgar boy,
Deep thought oft seem'd to fix his infant eye.
Dainties he heeded not, nor gaude, nor toy,
Save one short pipe of rudest minstrelsy:
Silent when glad; affectionate, though shy;
And now his look was most demurely sad;
And now he laugh'd aloud, yet none knew why.
The neighbours star'd and sigh'd, yet bless'd the lad:
Some deem'd him wondrous wise, and some believed
him mad.

17

But why should I his childish feats display?
Concourse, and noise, and toil, he ever fled;
Nor cared to mingle in the clamorous fray
Of squabbling imps; but to the forest sped;
Or roam'd at large the lonely mountain's head;
Or, where the maze of some bewilder'd stream
To deep untrodden groves his footsteps led,
There would he wander wild, till Phœbus' beam,
Shot from the western cliff, released the weary team.

18

Th' exploit of strength, dexterity, or speed,
To him nor vanity nor joy could bring.
His heart, from cruel sport estranged, would bleed
To work the wo of any living thing,
By trap, or net; by arrow, or by sling;
These he detested; those he scorn'd to wield:
He wish'd to be the guardian, not the king,
Tyrant far less, or traitor of the field.
And sure the sylvan reign unbloody joy might yield.

19

Lo! where the stripling, wrapt in wonder, roves
Beneath the precipice o'erhung with pine;
And sees, on high, amidst th' encircling groves,
From cliff to cliff the foaming torrents shine:
While waters, woods, and winds, in concert join,
And Echo swells the chorus to the skies.
Would Edwin this majestic scene resign
For aught the huntsman's puny craft supplies?
Ah! no: he better knows great Nature's charms to prize.

20

And oft he traced the uplands, to survey,
When o'er the sky advanced the kindling dawn,
The crimson cloud, blue main, and mountain grey,
And lake, dim-gleaming on the smoky lawn:
Far to the west the long long vale withdrawn,
Where twilight loves to linger for a while;
And now he faintly kens the bounding fawn,
And villager abroad at early toil.
But, lo! the sun appears! and heaven, earth, ocean, smile.

21

And oft the craggy cliff he loved to climb,
When all in mist the world below was lost.
What dreadful pleasure! there to stand sublime,
Like shipwreck'd mariner on desert coast,
And view th' enormous waste of vapour, tost
In billows, lengthening to th' horizon round,
Now scoop'd in gulfs, with mountains now emboss'd!
And hear the voice of mirth and song rebound,
Flocks, herds, and waterfalls, along the hoar profound!

22

In truth he was a strange and wayward wight,
Fond of each gentle, and each dreadful scene.
In darkness, and in storm, he found delight:
Nor less, than when on ocean-wave serene
The southern sun diffused his dazzling shene*.
Even sad vicissitude amused his soul:
And if a sigh would sometimes intervene,
And down his cheek a tear of pity roll,
A sigh, a tear, so sweet, he wish'd not to control.

23

"O ye wild groves, O where is now your bloom!"
(The Muse interprets thus his tender thought)
"Your flowers, your verdure, and your balmy gloom,
"Of late so grateful in the hour of drought!
"Why do the birds, that song and rapture brought
"To all your bowers, their mansions now forsake?
"Ah! why has fickle chance this ruin wrought?
"For now the storm howls mournful thro' the brake,
"And the dead foliage flies in many a shapeless flake.

* Brightness, splendour. The word is used by some late writers as well as by Milton.

24

" Where now the rill, melodious, pure, and cool,
" And meads, with life, and mirth, and beauty crown'd!
" Ah! see, th' unsightly slime, and sluggish pool,
" Have all the solitary vale embrown'd;
" Fled each fair form, and mute each melting sound,
" The raven croaks forlorn on naked spray:
" And hark! the river, bursting every mound,
" Down the vale thunders; and with wasteful sway
" Uproots the grove, and rolls the shattered rocks away.

25

" Yet such the destiny of all on earth:
" So flourishes and fades majestic Man:
" Fair is the bud his vernal morn brings forth,
" And fostering gales a while the nursling fan.
" O smile, ye heavens, serene; ye mildews wan,
" Ye blighting whirlwinds, spare his balmy prime,
" Nor lessen of his life the little span.
" Borne on the swift, though silent, wings of Time,
" Old age comes on apace to ravage all the clime.

26

"And be it so. Let those deplore their doom,
"Whose hope still grovels in this dark sojourn:
"But lofty souls, who look beyond the tomb,
"Can smile at Fate, and wonder how they mourn.
"Shall spring to these sad scenes no more return?
"Is yonder wave the sun's eternal bed?
"Soon shall the orient with new lustre burn,
"And spring shall soon her vital influence shed,
"Again attune the grove, again adorn the mead.

27

"Shall I be left forgotten in the dust,
"When Fate, relenting, lets the flower revive?
"Shall Nature's voice, to Man alone unjust,
"Bid him, though doomed to perish, hope to live?
"Is it for this fair Virtue oft must strive
"With disappointment, penury, and pain?
"No: Heaven's immortal spring shall yet arrive,
"And Man's majestic beauty bloom again,
"Bright thro' th' eternal year of Love's triumphant
"reign."

28

This truth sublime his simple sire had taught.
In sooth, 'twas almost all the shepherd knew.
No subtile nor superfluous lore he sought,
Nor ever wish'd his Edwin to pursue.
"Let man's own sphere (said he) confine his view,
"Be man's peculiar work his sole delight."
And much, and oft, he warn'd him, to eschew
Falsehood and guile, and aye maintain the right,
By pleasure unseduc'd, unaw'd by lawless might.

29

"And, from the prayer of Want, and plaint of Wo,
"O never, never turn away thine ear!
"Forlorn, in this bleak wilderness below,
"Ah! what were man, should Heaven refuse to hear!
"To others do (the law is not severe)
"What to thyself thou wishest to be done:
"Forgive thy foes; and love thy parents dear;
"And friends, and native land; nor those alone;
"All human weal and wo learn thou to make thine own."

30

See, in the rear of the warm sunny shower
The visionary boy from shelter fly;
For now the storm of summer-rain is o'er,
And cool, and fresh, and fragrant is the sky.
And, lo! in the dark east, expanded high,
The rainbow brightens to the setting sun!
Fond fool, that deem'st the streaming glory nigh,
How vain the chace thine ardour has begun!
'Tis fled afar, ere half thy purpos'd race be run.

31

Yet couldst thou learn, that thus it fares with age,
When pleasure, wealth, or power, the bosom warm,
This baffled hope might tame thy manhood's rage,
And Disappointment of her sting disarm.
But why should foresight thy fond heart alarm?
Perish the lore that deadens young desire;
Pursue, poor imp, th' imaginary charm,
Indulge gay Hope, and Fancy's pleasing fire:
Fancy and Hope too soon shall of themselves expire.

32

When the long-sounding curfew from afar
Loaded with loud lament the lonely gale,
Young Edwin, lighted by the evening star,
Lingering and listening, wander'd down the vale.
There would he dream of graves, and corses pale;
And ghosts that to the charnel-dungeon throng,
And drag a length of clanking chain, and wail,
Till silenced by the owl's terrific song,
Or blast that shrieks by fits the shuddering isles along.

33

Or, when the setting moon, in crimson dyed,
Hung o'er the dark and melancholy deep,
To haunted stream, remote from man, he hied,
Where fays of yore their revels wont to keep;
And there let Fancy rove at large, till sleep
A vision brought to his entranced sight.
And first, a wildly murmuring wind 'gan creep
Shrill to his ringing ear; then tapers bright,
With instantaneous gleam, illumed the vault of night.

34

Anon in view a portal's blazon'd arch
Arose; the trumpet bids the valves unfold;
And forth an host of little warriors march,
Grasping the diamond lance, and targe of gold.
Their look was gentle, their demeanor bold,
And green their helms, and green their silk attire;
And here and there, right venerably old,
The long-rob'd minstrels wake the warbling wire,
And some with mellow breath the martial pipe inspire.

35

With merriment, and song, and timbrels clear,
A troop of dames from myrtle bowers advance;
The little warriors doff the targe and spear,
And loud enlivening strains provoke the dance.
They meet, they dart away, they wheel askance;
To right, to left, they thrid the flying maze;
Now bound aloft with vigorous spring, then glance
Rapid along: with many-colour'd rays
Of tapers, gems, and gold, the echoing forests blaze.

36

The dream is fled. Proud harbinger of day,
Who scar'd'st the vision with thy clarion shrill,
Fell chanticleer! who oft hath reft away
My fancied good, and brought substantial ill!
O to thy cursed scream, discordant still,
Let harmony aye shut her gentle ear:
Thy boastful mirth let jealous rivals spill,
Insult thy crest, and glossy pinions tear,
And ever in thy dreams the ruthless fox appear.

37

Forbear, my muse. Let Love attune thy line.
Revoke the spell. Thine Edwin frets not so.
For how should he at wicked chance repine,
Who feels from every change amusement flow!
Even now his eyes with smiles of rapture glow,
As on he wanders through the scenes of morn,
Where the fresh flowers in living lustre blow,
Where thousand pearls, the dewy lawns adorn,
A thousand notes of joy in every breeze are borne.

38

But who the melodies of morn can tell?
The wild brook babbling down the mountain side;
The lowing herd; the sheepfold's simple bell;
The pipe of early shepherd dim descried
In the lone valley; echoing far and wide
The clamorous horn along the cliffs above;
The hollow murmur of the ocean-tide;
The hum of bees, the linnet's lay of love,
And the full choir that wakes the universal grove.

39

The cottage-curs at early pilgrim bark;
Crown'd with her pail the tripping milkmaid sings;
The whistling ploughman stalks afield; and, hark!
Down the rough slope the ponderous waggon rings;
Through rustling corn the hare astonish'd springs;
Slow tolls the village-clock the drowsy hour;
The partridge bursts away on whirring wings;
Deep mourns the turtle in sequester'd bower,
And shrill lark carols clear from her aërial tour.

40

O Nature, how in every charm supreme!
Whose votaries feast on raptures ever new!
O for the voice and fire of seraphim,
To sing thy glories with devotion due!
Blest be the day I 'scaped the wrangling crew,
From Pyrrho's maze, and Epicurus' sty;
And held high converse with the godlike few,
Who to th' enraptur'd heart, and ear, and eye,
Teach beauty, virtue, truth, and love, and melody.

41

Hence! ye, who snare and stupefy the mind,
Sophists, of beauty, virtue, joy, the bane!
Greedy and fell, though impotent and blind,
Who spread your filthy nets in Truth's fair fane,
And ever ply your venom'd fangs amain!
Hence to dark Error's den, whose rankling slime
First gave you form! Hence! lest the Muse should deign,
(Though loth on theme so mean to waste a rhyme),
With vengeance to pursue your sacrilegious crime.

42

But hail, ye mighty masters of the lay,
Nature's true sons, the friends of man and truth!
Whose song, sublimely sweet, serenely gay,
Amus'd my childhood, and inform'd my youth.
O let your spirit still my bosom sooth,
Inspire my dreams, and my wild wanderings guide:
Your voice each rugged path of life can smooth,
For well I know where-ever ye reside,
There harmony, and peace, and innocence abide.

43

Ah me! neglected on the lonesome plain,
As yet poor Edwin never knew your lore,
Save when against the winter's drenching rain,
And driving snow, the cottage shut the door.
Then, as instructed by tradition hoar,
Her legend when the Beldame 'gan impart,
Or chant the old heroic ditty o'er,
Wonder and joy ran thrilling to his heart;
Much he the tale admir'd, but more the tuneful art.

44

Various and strange was the long-winded tale;
And halls, and knights, and feats of arms, display'd;
Or merry swains, who quaff the nut-brown ale,
And sing, enamour'd of the nut-brown maid;
The moon-light revel of the fairy glade;
Or hags, that suckle an infernal brood,
And ply in caves th' unutterable trade,*
'Midst fiends and spectres, quench the moon in blood,
Yell in the midnight storm, or ride th' infuriate flood.

45

But when to horror his amazement rose,
A gentler strain the Beldame would rehearse,
A tale of rural life, a tale of woes,
The orphan-babes, and guardian uncle fierce.
O cruel! will no pang of pity pierce
That heart, by lust of lucre sear'd to stone?
For sure, if aught of virtue last, or verse,
To latest times shall tender souls bemoan
Those hopeless orphan-babes by thy fell arts undone.

* Allusion to *Shakespeare.*

Macbeth. How now, ye secret, black, and midnight hags,
What is't ye do?
Witches. A deed *without a name.* *Macbeth, Act 4. Scene 1.*

46

Behold, with berries smear'd, with brambles torn,*
The babes now famish'd lay them down to die:
Amidst the howl of darksome woods forlorn,
Folded in one another's arms they lie;
Nor friend, nor stranger, hears their dying cry:
"For from the town the man returns no more."
But thou, who Heaven's just vengeance dar'st defy,
This deed with fruitless tears shalt soon deplore,
When Death lays waste thy house, and flames consume thy store.

47

A stifled smile of stern vindictive joy
Brighten'd one moment Edwin's starting tear,
"But why should gold man's feeble mind decoy,
"And innocence thus die by doom severe?"
O Edwin! while thy heart is yet sincere,
Th' assaults of discontent and doubt repel:
Dark even at noontide is our mortal sphere;
But let us hope; to doubt is to rebel;
Let us exult in hope, that all shall yet be well.

* See the fine old ballad, called, *The Children in the Wood.*

48

Nor be thy generous indignation check'd,
Nor check'd the tender tear to Misery given;
From Guilt's contagious power shall that protect,
This soften and refine the soul for Heaven.
But dreadful is their doom, whom doubt has driven
To censure Fate, and pious Hope forego:
Like yonder blasted boughs by lightning riven,
Perfection, beauty, life, they never know,
But frown on all that pass, a monument of wo.

49

Shall he, whose birth, maturity, and age,
Scarce fill the circle of one summer day,
Shall the poor gnat, with discontent and rage
Exclaim that Nature hastens to decay,
If but a cloud obstruct the solar ray,
If but a momentary shower descend!
Or shall frail man Heaven's dread decree gainsay,
Which bade the series of events extend
Wide thro' unnumber'd worlds, and ages without end!

50

One part, one little part, we dimly scan
Thro' the dark medium of life's feverish dream;
Yet dare arraign the whole stupendous plan,
If but that little part incongruous seem.
Nor is that part perhaps what mortals deem;
Oft from apparent ill our blessings rise.
O then renounce that impious self-esteem,
That aims to trace the secrets of the skies:
For thou art but of dust; be humble, and be wise.

51

Thus Heaven enlarg'd his soul in riper years.
For Nature gave him strength, and fire, to soar
On Fancy's wing above this vale of tears;
Where dark cold-hearted sceptics, creeping, pore
Through microscope of metaphysic lore:
And much they grope for Truth, but never hit.
For why? Their powers, inadequate before,
This idle art makes more and more unfit;
Yet deem they darkness light, and their vain blunders wit.

52

Nor was this ancient Dame a foe to mirth.
Her ballad, jest, and riddle's quaint device
Oft cheer'd the shepherds round their social hearth;
Whom levity or spleen could ne'er entice
To purchase chat, or laughter, at the price
Of decency. Nor let it faith exceed,
That Nature forms a rustic taste so nice.
Ah! had they been of court or city breed,
Such delicacy were right marvellous indeed.

53

Oft when the winter storm had ceas'd to rave,
He roam'd the snowy waste at even, to view
The cloud stupendous, from th' Atlantic wave
High-towering, sail along th' horizon blue:
Where, 'midst the changeful scenery, ever new,
Fancy a thousand wondrous forms descries,
More wildly great than ever pencil drew,
Rocks, torrents, gulfs, and shapes of giant size,
And glitt'ring cliffs on cliffs, and fiery ramparts rise.

54

Thence musing onward to the sounding shore,
The lone enthusiast oft would take his way,
Listening, with pleasing dread, to the deep roar
Of the wide-weltering waves. In black array
When sulphurous clouds roll'd on th' autumnal day,
Even then he hasten'd from the haunt of man,
Along the trembling wilderness to stray,
What time the lightning's fierce career began,
And o'er heaven's rending arch the rattling thunder ran.

55

Responsive to the sprightly pipe, when all
In sprightly dance the village youth were join'd,
Edwin, of melody aye held in thrall,
From the rude gambol far remote reclin'd,
Sooth'd with the soft notes warbling in the wind.
Ah then, all jollity seem'd noise and folly,
To the pure soul by Fancy's fire refin'd,
Ah what is mirth but turbulence unholy,
When with the charm compar'd of heavenly melancholy!

F. Burney del. J. Neagle sculp.

Responsive to the sprightly pipe when all
In sprightly dance the village youth were join'd,
Edwin, of melody aye held in thrall,
From the rude gambol far remote reclin'd.

Minstrel B. I. v. 55.

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56

Is there a heart that music cannot melt?
Alas! how is that rugged heart forlorn;
Is there, who ne'er those mystic transports felt
Of solitude and melancholy born?
He needs not woo the Muse; he is her scorn.
The sophist's rope of cobweb he shall twine;
Mope o'er the schoolman's peevish page; or mourn,
And delve for life in Mammon's dirty mine;
Sneak with the scoundrel fox, or grunt with glutton swine.

57

For Edwin, Fate a nobler doom had plann'd;
Song was his favourite and first pursuit.
The wild harp rang to his advent'rous hand,
And languish'd to his breath the plaintive flute.
His infant muse, though artless, was not mute:
Of elegance as yet he took no care;
For this of time and culture is the fruit;
And Edwin gain'd at last this fruit so rare:
As in some future verse I purpose to declare.

58

Meanwhile, whate'er of beautiful, or new,
Sublime, or dreadful, in earth, sea, or sky,
By chance, or search, was offer'd to his view,
He scan'd with curious and romantic eye.
Whate'er of lore tradition could supply
From gothic tale, or song, or fable old,
Rous'd him, still keen to listen and to pry.
At last, though long by penury control'd,
And solitude, her soul his graces 'gan unfold.

59

Thus on the chill Lapponian's dreary land,
For many a long month lost in snow profound,
When Sol from Cancer sends the season bland,
And in their northern cave the storms are bound;
From silent mountains, straight, with startling sound,
Torrents are hurl'd; green hills emerge; and lo,
The trees with foliage, cliffs with flowers are crown'd;
Pure rills through vales of verdure warbling go;
And wonder, love, and joy, the peasant's heart o'erflow.*

* Spring and Autumn are hardly known to the Laplanders. About the time the sun enters Cancer, their fields, which a week before were covered with snow, appear on a sudden full of grass flowers. *Scheffer's History of Lapland, p.* 16.

60

Here pause, my gothic lyre, a little while.
The leisure hour is all that thou canst claim.
But on this verse if MONTAGUE should smile,
New strains ere long shall animate thy frame.
And her applause to me is more than fame;
For still with truth accords her taste refin'd.
At lucre or renown let others aim,
I only wish to please the gentle mind,
Whom Nature's charms inspire, and love of humankind.

THE

MINSTREL:

OR,

THE PROGRESS OF GENIUS.

BOOK II.

THE

MINSTREL:

OR,

THE PROGRESS OF GENIUS.

BOOK II.

1

OF chance or change O let not man complain,
Else shall he never never cease to wail;
For, from the imperial dome, to where the swain
Rears the lone cottage in the silent dale,
All feel th' assault of Fortune's fickle gale;
Art, empire, earth itself, to change are doom'd;
Earthquakes have rais'd to heaven the humble vale,
And gulphs the mountain's mighty mass entomb'd;
And where th' Atlantic rolls wide continents have bloom'd.*

* See *Plato's* Timeus.

2

But sure to foreign climes we need not range,
Nor search the ancient records of our race,
To learn the dire effects of time and change,
Which in ourselves, alas! we daily trace.
Yet at the darken'd eye, the wither'd face,
Or hoary hair, I never will repine:
But spare, O Time, whate'er of mental grace,
Of candour, love, or sympathy divine,
Whate'er of fancy's ray, or friendship's flame is mine.

3

So I, obsequious to Truth's dread command,
Shall here without reluctance change my lay,
And smite the gothic lyre with harsher hand;
Now when I leave that flowery path for aye
Of childhood, where I sported many a day,
Warbling and sauntering carelessly along;
Where every face was innocent and gay,
Each vale romantic, tuneful every tongue,
Sweet, wild, and artless all, as Edwin's infant song.

4

" Perish the lore that deadens young desire,"
Is the soft tenor of my song no more.
Edwin, tho' lov'd of Heaven, must not aspire
To bliss, which mortals never knew before.
On trembling wings let youthful fancy soar,
Nor always haunt the sunny realms of joy:
But now and then the shades of life explore;
Tho' many a sound and sight of wo annoy,
And many a qualm of care his rising hopes destroy.

5

Vigour from toil, from trouble patience grows.
The weakly blossom, warm in summer bower,
Some tints of transient beauty may disclose;
But soon it withers in the chilling hour.
Mark yonder oaks! Superior to the power
Of all the warring winds of heaven they rise,
And from the stormy promontory tower,
And toss their giant arms amid the skies,
While each assailing blast increase of strength supplies.

6.

And now the downy cheek and deepen'd voice
Gave dignity to Edwin's blooming prime;
And walks of wider circuit were his choice,
And vales more wild, and mountains more sublime.
One evening, as he fram'd the careless rhyme,
It was his chance to wander far abroad,
And o'er a lonely eminence to climb,
Which heretofore his foot had never trode;
A vale appear'd below, a deep retired abode.

7

Thither he hied, enamour'd of the scene,
For rocks on rocks pil'd, as by magic spell,
Here scorch'd with lightning, there with ivy green,
Fenc'd from the north and east this savage dell.
Southward a mountain rose with easy swell,
Whose long long groves eternal murmur made:
And toward the western sun a streamlet fell,
Where, thro' the cliffs, the eye, remote, survey'd
Blue hills, and glittering waves, and skies in gold array'd.

8

Along this narrow valley you might see
The wild deer sporting on the meadow ground,
And, here and there, a solitary tree,
Or mossy stone, or rock with woodbine crown'd.
Oft did the cliffs reverberate the sound
Of parted fragments tumbling from on high;
And from the summit of that craggy mound
The perching eagle oft was heard to cry,
Or on resounding wings, to shoot athwart the sky.

9

One cultivated spot there was, that spread
Its flowery bosom to the noonday beam,
Where many a rose-bud rears its blushing head,
And herbs for food with future plenty teem.
Sooth'd by the lulling sound of grove and stream,
Romantic visions swarm on Edwin's soul:
He minded not the sun's last trembling gleam,
Nor heard from far the twilight curfew toll;
When slowly on his ear these moving accents stole.

10

" Hail, awful scenes, that calm the troubl'd breast,
" And woo the weary to profound repose!
" Can passion's wildest uproar lay to rest,
" And whisper comfort to the man of woes!
" Here Innocence may wander, safe from foes,
" And Contemplation soar on seraph wings.
" O solitude! the man who thee foregoes,
" When lucre lures him, or ambition stings,
" Shall never know the source whence real grandeur
" springs.

11

" Vain man! is grandeur given to gay attire?
" Then let the butterfly thy pride upbraid:
" To friends, attendants, armies, bought with hire?
" It is thy weakness that requires their aid:
" To palaces, with gold and gems inlay'd?
" They fear the thief, and tremble in the storm:
" To hosts, thro' carnage who to conquest wade?
" Behold the victor vanquish'd by the worm!
" Behold, what deeds of wo the locust can perform!

12

" True dignity is his, whose tranquil mind
" Virtue has rais'd above the things below;
" Who, every hope and fear to Heaven resign'd,
" Shrinks not, tho' Fortune aim her deadliest blow."
This strain from 'midst the rocks was heard to flow,
In solemn sounds. Now beam'd the evening star;
And from embattled clouds emerging slow
Cynthia came riding on her silver car;
And hoary mountain-cliffs shone faintly from afar.

13

Soon did the solemn voice its theme renew:
(While Edwin wrapt in wonder listening stood)
" Ye tools and toys of tyranny, adieu,
" Scorn'd by the wise and hated by the good!
" Ye only can engage the servile brood
" Of Levity and Lust, who all their days,
" Asham'd of truth and liberty, have woo'd,
" And hug'd the chain, that, glittering on their gaze,
" Seems to outshine the pomp of heaven's empyreal
" blaze.

14

" Like them, abandon'd to Ambition's sway,
" I sought for glory in the paths of guile;
" And fawn'd and smil'd, to plunder and betray,
" Myself betray'd and plunder'd all the while;
" So gnaw'd the viper the corroding file;
" But now, with pangs of keen remorse, I rue
" Those years of trouble and debasement vile.
" Yet why should I this cruel theme pursue!
" Fly, fly, detested thoughts, for ever, from my view!

15

" The gusts of appetite, the clouds of care,
" And storms of disappointment, all o'erpast,
" Henceforth no earthly hope with heaven shall share
" This heart, where peace serenely shines at last.
" And if for me no treasure be amass'd,
" And if no future age shall hear my name,
" I lurk the more secure from fortune's blast,
" And with more leisure feed this pious flame,
" Whose rapture far transcends the fairest hopes of fame.

16

" The end and the reward of toil is rest.
" Be all my prayer for virtue and for peace,
" Of wealth and fame, of pomp and power possess'd,
" Who ever felt his weight of wo decrease?
" Ah! what avails the lore of Rome and Greece,
" The lay heaven-prompted, and harmonious string,
" The dust of Ophir, or the Tyrian fleece,
" All that art, fortune, enterprise, can bring,
" If envy, scorn, remorse, or pride the bosom wring!

17

" Let Vanity adorn the marble tomb
" With trophies, rhymes, and scutcheons of renown,
" In the deep dungeon of some gothic dome,
" Where night and desolation ever frown.
" Mine be the breezy hill that skirts the down;
" Where a green grassy turf is all I crave,
" With here and there a violet bestrown,
" Fast by a brook, or fountain's murmuring wave;
" And many an evening sun shine sweetly on my grave.

18

" And thither let the village swain repair;
" And, light of heart, the village maiden gay,
" To deck with flowers her half-dishevel'd hair,
" And celebrate the merry morn of May.
" There let the shepherd's pipe the live-long day
" Fill all the grove with love's bewitching wo;
" And when mild Evening comes in mantle gray,
" Let not the blooming band make haste to go;
" No ghost, nor spell, my long and last abode shall
" know.

19

" For though I fly to scape from Fortune's rage,
" And bear the scars of envy, spite, and scorn,
" Yet with mankind no horrid war I wage,
" Yet with no impious spleen my breast is torn:
" For virtue lost, and ruin'd man, I mourn.
" O Man! creation's pride, Heaven's darling child,
" Whom Nature's best, divinest gifts adorn,
" Why from thy home are truth and joy exil'd,
" And all thy favourite haunts with blood and tears
" defil'd?

E. F. Burney del. J. Heath sculp.

And thither let the village swain repair;
And, light of heart, the village maiden gay,
To deck with flowers her half-dishevel'd hair,
And celebrate the merry morn of May.

Minstrel. Book 2. ver. XVIII.

Published June 1st 1801, by J. Harrison, London.

20

" Along yon glittering sky what glory streams!
" What majesty attends Night's lovely queen!
" Fair laugh our vallies in the vernal beams;
" And mountains rise, and oceans roll between,
" And all conspire to beautify the scene.
" But, in the mental world, what chaos drear;
" What forms of mournful, loathsome, furious mien!
" O when shall that Eternal Morn appear,
" These dreadful forms to chase, this chaos dark to
" clear!

21

" O Thou, at whose creative smile, yon heaven,
" In all the pomp of beauty, life, and light
" Rose from th' abyss; when dark Confusion, driven
" Down, down the bottomless profound of night,
" Fled, where he ever flies thy piercing sight!
" O glance on these sad shades one pitying ray,
" To blast the fury of oppressive might,
" Melt the hard heart to love and mercy's sway,
" And cheer the wandering soul, and light him on the
" way!"

22

Silence ensu'd: and Edwin raised his eyes.
In tears, for grief lay heavy at his heart.
" And is it thus in courtly life (he cries)
" That man to man acts a betrayer's part?
" And dares he thus the gifts of Heaven pervert,
" Each social instinct, and sublime desire?
" Hail Poverty! if honour, wealth, and art,
" If what the great pursue, and learn'd admire,
" Thus dissipate and quench the soul's ethereal fire!"

23

He said, and turn'd away; nor did the Sage
O'erhear, in silent orisons employ'd.
The Youth, his rising sorrow to assuage,
Home as he hied, the evening scene enjoy'd:
For now no cloud obscures the starry vaid;
The yellow moonlight sleeps on all the hills;*
Nor is the mind with startling sounds annoy'd;
A soothing murmur the lone region fills,
Of groves, and dying gales, and melancholy rills.

* How sweet the moonlight sleeps upon this bank. *Shakespeare.*

P. 49.

E. F. Burney del. J. Taylor sculp.

And, kneeling, lick'd the witherid hand, that tied
A wreathe of woodbine round his antlers tall.

Minstrel Book 2. ver. XXV.

Published June 1, 1810, by J. Mawman, London.

24

But he from day to day more anxious grew,
The voice still seem'd to vibrate on his ear.
Nor durst he hope the Hermit's tale untrue;
For man he seem'd to love, and heaven to fear;
And none speaks false, where there is none to hear.
"Yet, can man's gentle heart become so fell!
"No more in vain conjecture let me wear
"My hours away, but seek the Hermit's cell;
"'Tis he my doubt can clear, perhaps my care dispel."

25

At early dawn the Youth his journey took,
And many a mountain pass'd and valley wide,
Then reach'd the wild; where, in a flowery nook,
And seated on a mossy stone, he spied
An ancient man: his harp lay him beside.
A stag sprang from the pasture at his call,
And, kneeling, lick'd the wither'd hand that tied
A wreath of woodbine round his antlers tall,
And hung his lofty neck with many a flow'ret small.

26

And now the hoary Sage arose, and saw
The wanderer approaching: innocence
Smil'd on his glowing cheek, but modest awe
Depress'd his eye, that fear'd to give offence.
" Who art thou, courteous stranger? and from whence?
" Why roam thy steps to this sequester'd dale?"
" A shepherd-boy (the Youth replied) far hence.
" My habitation; hear my artless tale;
" Nor levity nor falsehood shall thine ear assail.

27

" Late as I roam'd, intent on Nature's charms,
" I reach'd at eve this wilderness profound;
" And, leaning where yon oak expands her arms,
" Heard these rude cliffs thine awful voice rebound.
" (For in thy speech I recognise the sound.)
" You mourn'd for ruin'd man, and virtue lost,
" And seem'd to feel of keen remorse the wound,
" Pondering on former days by guilt engross'd,
" Or in the giddy storm of dissipation toss'd.

28

"But say, in courtly life can craft be learn'd,
"Where knowledge opens, and exalts the soul?
"Where Fortune lavishes her gifts unearn'd,
"Can selfishness the liberal heart control?
"Is glory there achiev'd by arts, as foul
"As those that felons, fiends, and furies plan?
"Spiders ensnare, snakes poison, tygers prowl:
"Love is the godlike attribute of man.
"O teach a simple youth this mystery to scan.

29

"Or else the lamentable strain disclaim,
"And give me back the calm, contented mind;
"Which, late, exulting, view'd in Nature's frame,
"Goodness untainted, wisdom unconfin'd,
"Grace, grandeur, and utility combin'd.
"Restore those tranquil days, that saw me still
"Well pleas'd with all, but most with humankind:
"When Fancy roam'd thro' Nature's works at will,
"Uncheck'd by cold distrust, and uninform'd of ill."

30

" Wouldst thou (the Sage replied) in peace return
" To the gay dreams of fond romantic youth,
" Leave me to hide, in this remote sojourn,
" From every gentle ear the dreadful truth:
" For if my desultory strain with ruth
" And indignation make thine eyes o'erflow,
" Alas! what comfort could thy anguish sooth,
" Shouldst thou th' extent of human folly know.
" Be ignorance thy choice, where knowledge leads to
" wo.

31

" But let untender thoughts afar be driven;
" Nor venture to arraign the dread decree.
" For know, to man, as candidate for heaven,
" The voice of The Eternal said, Be free:
" And this divine prerogative to thee
" Does virtue, happiness, and heaven convey;
" For virtue is the child of liberty,
" And happiness of virtue; nor can they
" Be free to keep the path, who are not free to stray.

32

" Yet leave me not. I would allay that grief,
" Which else might thy young virtue over-power,
" And in thy converse I shall find relief,
" When the dark shades of melancholy lower;
" For Solitude has many a dreary hour,
" Even when exempt from grief, remorse, and pain:
" Come often then; for, haply, in my bower,
" Amusement, knowledge, wisdom thou may'st gain:
" If I one soul improve, I have not liv'd in vain."

33

And now, at length, to Edwin's ardent gaze
The Muse of History unrolls her page.
But few, alas! the scenes her art displays,
To charm his fancy, or his heart engage.
Here Chiefs their thirst of power in blood asswage,
And straight their flames with tenfold fierceness burn:
Here smiling Virtue prompts the patriot's rage,
But lo, ere long, is left alone to mourn,
And languish in the dust, and clasp th' abandon'd urn!

34

" Ambition's slippery verge shall mortals tread,
" Where ruin's gulph unfathom'd yawns beneath!
" Shall life, shall liberty be lost, (he said)
" For the vain toys that Pomp and Power bequeath!
" The car of victory, the plume, the wreathe,
" Defend not from the bolt of fate the brave:
" No note the clarion of Renown can breathe,
" T' alarm the long night of the lonely grave,
" Or check the headlong haste of Time's o'erwhelming
" wave.

35

" Ah, what avails it to have trac'd the springs,
" That whirl of empire the stupendous wheel!
" Ah, what have I to do with conquering kings,
" Hands drench'd in blood, and breasts begirt with steel!
" To those, whom Nature taught to think and feel,
" Heroes, alas! are things of small concern;
" Could History man's secret heart reveal,
" And what imports a heaven-born mind to learn,
" Her transcripts to explore what bosom would not
" yearn!

36

" This praise, O Cheronean Sage,* is thine!
" (Why should this praise to thee alone belong?)
" All else from Nature's moral path decline,
" Lur'd by the toys that captivate the throng;
" To herd in cabinets and camps, among
" Spoil, carnage, and the cruel pomp of pride;
" Or chaunt of heraldry the drowsy song,
" How tyrant blood, o'er many a region wide,
" Rolls to a thousand thrones its execrable tide.

37

" O who of man the story will unfold,
" Ere victory and empire wrought annoy,
" In that elysian age (misnam'd of gold)
" The age of love, and innocence and joy,
" When all were great and free! man's sole employ
" To deck the bosom of his parent earth;
" Or toward his bower the murmuring stream decoy,
" To aid the flow'ret's long-expected birth,
" And lull the bed of peace, and crown the board of
" mirth.

* Plutarch.

38

" Sweet were your shades, O ye primeval groves!
" Whose boughs to man his food and shelter lent,
" Pure in his pleasures, happy in his loves,
" His eye still smiling, and his heart content.
" Then, hand in hand, health, sport, and labour went.
" Nature supply'd the wish she taught to crave.
" None prowl'd for prey, none watch'd to circumvent.
" To all an equal lot Heaven's bounty gave:
" No vassal fear'd his lord, no tyrant fear'd his slave.

39

" But ah! th'. Historic Muse has never dar'd
" To pierce those hallow'd bowers: 'tis Fancy's beam
" Pour'd on the vision of th' enraptur'd Bard,
" That paints the charms of that delicious theme.
" Then hail sweet Fancy's ray! and hail the dream
" That weans the weary soul from guilt and wo!
" Careless what others of my choice may deem,
" I long, where Love and Fancy lead, to go
" And meditate on heaven, enough of earth I know."

40

" I cannot blame thy choice (the Sage replied)
" For soft and smooth are Fancy's flowery ways.
" And yet, even there, if left without a guide,
" The young adventurer unsafely plays.
" Eyes dazzl'd long by Fiction's gaudy rays
" In modest Truth no light nor beauty find.
" And who, my child, would trust the meteor-blaze,
" That soon must fail, and leave the wanderer blind,
" More dark and helpless far, than if it ne'er had shin'd?

41

" Fancy enervates, while it sooths, the heart,
" And, while it dazzles, wounds the mental sight:
" To joy each heightening charm it can impart,
" But wraps the hour of wo in tenfold night.
" And often, where no real ills affright,
" Its visionary fiends, an endless train,
" Assail with equal or superior might,
" And thro' the throbbing heart, and dizzy brain,
" And shivering nerves, shoot stings of more than mor-
" tal pain.

42

" And yet, alas! the real ills of life
" Claim the full vigour of a mind prepar'd,
" Prepar'd for patient, long, laborious strife,
" Its guide Experience, and Truth its guard.
" We fare on earth as other men have far'd.
" Were they successful? Let not us despair.
" Was disappointment oft their sole reward?
" Yet shall their tale instruct, if it declare,
" How they have borne the load ourselves are doom'd
" to bear.

43

" What charms th' Historic Muse adorn, from spoils,
" And blood, and tyrants, when she wings her flight,
" To hail the patriot Prince, whose pious toils
" Sacred to science, liberty, and right,
" And peace, through every age divinely bright
" Shall shine the boast and wonder of mankind!
" Sees yonder sun, from his meridian height,
" A lovelier scene, than Virtue thus enshrin'd
" In power, and man with man for mutual aid com-
" bin'd?

44

" Hail sacred Polity, by Freedom rear'd!
" Hail sacred Freedom, when by Law restrain'd!
" Without you what were man? A groveling herd
" In darkness, wretchedness, and want enchain'd.
" Sublim'd by you, the Greek and Roman reign'd
" In arts unrivall'd: O, to latest days,
" In Albion may your influence unprofan'd
" To godlike worth the generous bosom raise,
" And prompt the Sage's lore, and fire the Poet's lays!

45

" But now let other themes our care engage.
" For lo, with modest yet majestic grace,
" To curb Imagination's lawless rage,
" And from within the cherish'd heart to brace,
" Philosophy appears! The gloomy race
" By Indolence and moping Fancy bred,
" Fear, Discontent, Solicitude give place,
" And Hope and Courage brighten in their stead,
" While on the kindling soul her vital beams are shed.

46

" Then waken from long lethargy to life*
" The seeds of happiness, and powers of thought;
" Then jarring appetites forego their strife,
" A strife by ignorance to madness wrought.
" Pleasure by savage man is dearly bought
" With fell revenge, lust that defies controul,
" With gluttony and death. The mind untaught
" Is a dark waste, where fiends and tempests howl;
" As Phœbus to the world, is Science to the soul.

47

" And Reason now thro' Number, Time, and Space,
" Darts the keen lustre of her serious eye,
" And learns, from facts compar'd, the laws to trace,
" Whose long progression leads to Deity.
" Can mortal strength presume to soar so high!
" Can mortal sight, so oft bedim'd with tears,
" Such glory bear!—for lo, the shadows fly
" From Nature's face; Confusion disappears,
" And Order charms the eye, and Harmony the ears!

* The influence of the Philosophic Spirit, in humanizing the mind, and preparing it for intellectual exertion and delicate pleasure;—in exploring, by the help of geometry, the system of the

48

" In the deep windings of the grove, no more
" The hag obscene, and grisly phantom dwell;
" Nor in the fall of mountain-stream, or roar
" Of winds, is heard the angry spirit's yell;
" No wizzard mutters the tremendous spell,
" Nor sinks convulsive in prophetic swoon;
" Nor bids the noise of drums and trumpets swell,
" To ease of fancied pangs the labouring moon,
" Or chace the shade that blots the blazing orb of noon.

49

" Many a long-lingering year, in lonely isle,
" Stun'd with th' eternal turbulence of waves,
" Lo, with dim eyes, that never learn'd to smile,
" And trembling hands, the famish'd native craves
" Of Heaven his wretched fare; shivering in caves,
" Or scorch'd on rocks, he pines from day to day;
" But Science gives the word; and lo, he braves
" The surge and tempest, lighted by her ray,
" And to a happier land wafts merrily away!

universe;—in banishing superstition;—in promoting navigation, agriculture, medicine, and moral and political science:—from Stanza 46 to Stanza 56.

50

" And even where Nature loads the teeming plain
" With the full pomp of vegetable store,
" Her bounty, unimprov'd, is deadly bane:
" Dark woods and rankling wilds, from shore to shore,
" Stretch their enormous gloom; which to explore
" Even Fancy trembles, in her sprightliest mood;
" For there, each eye-ball gleams with lust of gore,
" Nestles each murderous and each monstrous brood,
" Plague lurks in every shade, and steams from every
" flood.

51

" 'Twas from Philosophy man learn'd to tame
" The soil by plenty to intemperance fed:
" Lo, from the echoing ax, and thundering flame,
" Poison and plague and yelling rage are fled!
" The waters, bursting from their slimy bed,
" Bring health and melody to every vale:
" And, from the breezy main, and mountain's head,
" Ceres and Flora, to the sunny dale,
" To fan their glowing charms, invite the fluttering
" gale.

52

" What dire necessities on every hand
" Our art, our strength, our fortitude require!
" Of foes intestine what a numerous band
" Against this little throb of life conspire!
" Yet Science can elude their fatal ire
" A while, and turn aside Death's level'd dart,
" Sooth the sharp pang, allay the fever's fire,
" And brace the nerves once more, and cheer the heart,
" And yet a few soft nights and balmy days impart.

53

" Nor less to regulate man's moral frame
" Science exerts her all-composing sway.
" Flutters thy breast with fear, or pants for fame,
" Or pines to Indolence and Spleen a prey,
" Or Avarice, a fiend more fierce than they?
" Flee to the shade of Academus' grove;
" Where cares molest not, discord melts away
" In harmony, and the pure passions prove
" How sweet the words of truth breath'd from the lips
" of Love.

54

" What cannot Art and Industry perform,
" When Science plans the progress of their toil!
" They smile at penury, disease, and storm;
" And oceans from their mighty mounds recoil.
" When tyrants scourge, or demagogues embroil
" A land, or when the rabble's headlong rage
" Order transforms to anarchy and spoil,
" Deep-vers'd in man the philosophic Sage
" Prepares with lenient hand their phrenzy to asswage.

55

" 'Tis he alone, whose comprehensive mind,
" From situation, temper, soil and clime
" Explor'd, a nation's various powers can bind
" And various orders, in one form sublime
" Of policy, that, midst the wrecks of time,
" Secure shall lift its head on high, nor fear
" Th' assault of foreign or domestic crime,
" While public faith, and public love sincere,
" And Industry and Law maintain their sway severe."

56

Enraptur'd by the Hermit's strain, the Youth
Proceeds the path of Science to explore.
And now, expanded to the beams of Truth,
New energies and charms unknown before,
His mind discloses: Fancy now no more
Wantons on fickle pinion through the skies;
But, fix'd in aim, and conscious of her power,
Aloft from cause to cause exults to rise,
Creation's blended stores arranging as she flies.

57

Nor love of novelty alone inspires,
Their laws and nice dependencies to scan;
For, mindful of the aids that life requires,
And of the services man owes to man,
He meditates new arts on Nature's plan;
The cold desponding breast of Sloth to warm,
The flame of Industry and Genius fan,
And Emulation's noble rage alarm,
And the long hours of Toil and Solitude to charm.

58

But She, who set on fire his infant heart,
And all his dreams, and all his wanderings shar'd
And bless'd, the Muse, and her celestial art,
Still claim th' Enthusiast's fond and first regard.
From Nature's beauties variously compar'd
And variously combin'd, he learns to frame
Those forms of bright perfection,* which the Bard,
While boundless hopes and boundless views inflame,
Enamour'd consecrates to never-dying fame.

59

Of late, with cumbersome, tho' pompous show,
Edwin would oft his flowery rhyme deface,
Through ardour to adorn; but Nature now
To his experienced eye a modest grace
Presents, where Ornament the second place
Holds, to intrinsic worth and just design
Subservient still. Simplicity apace
Tempers his rage: he owns her charm divine,
And clears th' ambiguous phrase, and lops th' unwieldy line.

* General ideas of excellence, the immediate archetypes of sublime imitation, both in painting and in poetry. *See Aristotle's Poetics, and the Discourses of Sir Joshua Reynolds.*

60

Fain would I sing (much yet unsung remains)
What sweet delirium o'er his bosom stole,
When the great Shepherd of the Mantuan plains*
His deep majestic melody 'gan roll:
Fain would I sing what transport storm'd his soul,
How the red current throb'd his veins along,
When, like Pelides, bold beyond controul,
Without art graceful, without effort strong,
Homer rais'd high to heaven the loud, th' impetuous song.

61

And how his lyre, though rude her first essays,
Now skilled to sooth, to triumph, to complain,
Warbling at will through each harmonious maze,
Was taught to modulate the artful strain,
I fain would sing:—but ah! I strive in vain.
Sighs from a breaking heart my voice confound,
With trembling step, to join yon weeping train,
I haste, where gleams funereal glare around,
And, mix'd with shrieks of wo, the knells of death resound.

* Virgil.

62

Adieu, ye lays, that Fancy's flowers adorn,
The soft amusement of the vacant mind!
He sleeps in dust, and all the Muses mourn,
He, whom each virtue fir'd, each grace refin'd,
Friend, teacher, pattern, darling of mankind!*
He sleeps in dust. Ah, how shall I pursue
My theme! To heart-consuming grief resign'd,
Here on his recent grave I fix my view,
And pour my bitter tears. Ye flowery lays, adieu!

63

Art thou, my GREGORY, for ever fled!
And am I left to unavailing wo!
When fortune's storms assail this weary head,
Where cares long since have shed untimely snow!
Ah, now for comfort whither shall I go!
No more thy soothing voice my anguish chears:
Thy placid eyes with smiles no longer glow,
My hopes to cherish, and allay my fears.
'Tis meet that I should mourn: flow forth afresh my tears.

* This excellent person died suddenly on the 10th of February 1. The conclusion of the poem was written a few days after.

POEMS

ON

SEVERAL OCCASIONS.

POEMS

ON

SEVERAL OCCASIONS.

RERIREMENT.

1758.

WHEN in the crimson cloud of Even,
The lingering light decays,
And Hesper on the front of Heaven
His glittering gem displays;
Deep in the silent vale, unseen,
Beside a lulling stream,
A pensive Youth, of placid mien,
Indulg'd this tender theme.

Ye cliffs, in hoary grandeur pil'd
High o'er the glimmering dale;
Ye woods, along whose windings wild
Murmurs the solemn gale:

Where Melancholy strays forlorn,
And Wo retires to weep,
What time the wan moon's yellow horn
Gleams on the western deep:

To you, ye wastes, whose artless charms
Ne'er drew Ambition's eye,
Scap'd a tumultuous world's alarms,
To your retreats I fly.
Deep in your most sequester'd bower
Let me at last recline,
Where Solitude, mild, modest Power,
Leans on her ivy'd shrine.

How shall I woo thee, matchless Fair!
Thy heavenly smile how win!
Thy smile that smooths the brow of Care,
And stills the storm within.
O wilt thou to thy favourite grove
Thine ardent votary bring,
And bless his hours, and bid them move
Serene, on silent wing!

Oft let Remembrance sooth his mind
With dreams of former days,
When in the lap of Peace reclin'd
He fram'd his infant lays;
When Fancy rov'd at large, nor Care
Nor cold Distrust alarm'd,
Nor Envy with malignant glare
His simple youth had harm'd.

'Twas then, O Solitude! to thee
His early vow were paid,
From heart sincere, and warm, and free,
Devoted to the shade.
Ah why did Fate his steps decoy
In stormy paths to roam,
Remote from all congenial joy!—
O take the Wanderer home.

Thy shades, thy silence now be mine,
Thy charms my only theme;
My haunt the hollow cliff, whose pine
Waves o'er the gloomy stream.

Whence the scar'd owl on pinions gray
Breaks from the rustling boughs,
And down the lone vale sails away
To more profound repose.

O, while to thee the woodland pours
Its wildly warbling song,
And balmy from the bank of flowers
The zephyr breathes along;
Let no rude sound invade from far,
No vagrant foot be nigh,
No ray from Grandeur's gilded car,
Flash on the startled eye.

But if some pilgrim through the glade
Thy hallow'd bowers explore,
O guard from harm his hoary head,
And listen to his lore;
For he of joys divine shall tell,
That wean from earthly woe,
And triumph o'er the mighty spell
That chains his heart below.

For me, no more the path invites
Ambition loves to tread;
No more I climb those toilsome heights
By guileful Hope misled;
Leaps my fond fluttering heart no more
To Mirth's enlivening strain;
For present pleasure soon is o'er,
And all the past is vain.

ELEGY.

WRITTEN IN THE YEAR 1758.

STILL shall unthinking man substantial deem
The forms that fleet thro' life's deceitful dream?
Till at some stroke of Fate the vision flies,
And sad realities in prospect rise;
And, from elysian slumbers rudely torn,
The startled soul awakes, to think, and mourn.
O ye, whose hours in jocund train advance,
Whose spirits to the song of gladness dance,
Who flowery plains in endless pomp survey,
Glittering in beams of visionary day;
O, yet while Fate delays th' impending wo,
Be rous'd to thought, anticipate the blow;
Lest, like the lightning's glance, the sudden ill
Flash to confound, and penetrate to kill;
Lest, thus encompass'd with funereal gloom,
Like me, ye bend o'er some untimely tomb,

Pour your wild ravings in Night's frighted ear,
And half pronounce Heaven's sacred doom severe.
Wise, Beauteous, Good! O every grace combin'd,
That charms the eye, or captivates the mind!
Fresh, as the floweret opening on the morn,
Whose leaves bright drops of liquid pearl adorn!
Sweet, as the downy-pinion'd gale, that roves
To gather fragrance in Arabian groves!
Mild, as the melodies at close of day,
That heard remote along the vale decay!
Yet, why with these compar'd? What tints so fine,
What sweetness, mildness, can be match'd with thine?
Why roam abroad, since recollection true
Restores the lovely form to Fancy's view?
Still let me gaze, and every care beguile,
Gaze on that cheek, where all the graces smile;
That soul-expressing eye, benignly bright,
Where meekness beams ineffable delight;
That brow, where Wisdom sits enthron'd serene,
Each feature forms, and dignifies the mien:
Still let me listen, while her words impart
The sweet effusions of the blameless heart,

Till all my soul, each tumult charm'd away,
Yields, gently led, to Virtue's easy sway.
By thee inspir'd, O Virtue, Age is young,
And music warbles from the faultering tongue:
Thy ray creative cheers the clouded brow,
And decks the faded cheek with rosy glow,
Brightens the joyless aspect, and supplies
Pure heavenly lustre to the languid eyes:
But when Youth's living bloom reflects thy beams,
Resistless on the view the glory streams,
Love, Wonder, Joy, alternately alarm,
And Beauty dazzles with angelic charm.
Ah whither fled! ye dear illusions stay!
Lo, pale and silent lies the lovely clay.
How are the roses on that cheek decay'd,
Which late the purple light of youth display'd!
Health on her form each sprightly grace bestow'd;
With life and thought each speaking feature glow'd.
Fair was the blossom, soft the vernal sky;
Elate with hope we deem'd no tempest nigh;
When lo, a whirlwind's instantaneous gust
Left all its beauties withering in the dust.

Cold the soft hand, that sooth'd Wo's weary head!
And quench'd the eye, the pitying tear that shed!
And mute the voice, whose pleasing accents stole,
Infusing balm, into the rankled soul!
O Death, why arm with cruelty thy power,
And spare the idle weed, yet lop the flower!
Why fly thy shafts in lawless error driven!
Is Virtue then no more the care of Heaven!
But peace, bold thought! be still, my bursting heart!
We, not ELIZA, felt the fatal dart.
Escap'd the dungeon, does the slave complain,
Nor bless the friendly hand that broke the chain?
Say, pines not Virtue for the lingering morn,
On this dark wild condemn'd to roam forlorn!
Where Reason's meteor-rays, with sickly glow,
O'er the dun gloom a dreadful glimmering throw;
Disclosing dubious to th' affrighted eye
O'erwhelming mountains tottering from on high,
Black billowy deeps in storms perpetual toss'd,
And weary ways in wildering labyrinths lost.
O happy stroke, that burst the bonds of clay,
Darts through the rending gloom the blaze of day,

And wings the soul with boundless flight to soar,
Where dangers threat, and fears alarm no more.
Transporting thought! here let we wipe away
The tear of grief and wake a bolder lay.
But ah! the swimming eye o'erflows anew;
Nor check the sacred drops to pity due;
Lo, where in speechless, hopeless anguish, bend
O'er her lov'd dust, the Parent, Brother, Friend!
How vain the hope of man! But cease thy strain,
Nor Sorrow's dread solemnity profane;
Mix'd with yon drooping Mourners, on her bier
In silence shed the sympathetic tear.

ODE TO HOPE.

I. 1.

O THOU, who glad'st the pensive soul,
More than Aurora's smile the swain forlorn,
Left all night long to mourn
Where desolation frowns, and tempests howl;
And shrieks of wo, as intermits the storm,
Far o'er the monstrous wilderness resound,
And cross the gloom darts many a shapeless form,
And many a fire-eyed visage glares around.
O come, and be once more my guest:
Come, for thou oft thy suppliant's vow hast heard,
And oft with smiles indulgent chear'd
And sooth'd him into rest.

I. 2.

Smit by thy rapture-beaming eye
Deep flashing thro' the midnight of their mind,
The sable bands combin'd,
Where Fear's black banner bloats the troubled sky,

Appall'd retire. Suspicion hides her head,
Nor dares th' obliquely gleaming eyeball raise;
Despair, with gorgon-figured veil o'erspread,
Speeds to dark Phlegethon's detested maze.
Lo, startled at the heavenly ray,
With speed unwonted Indolence upsprings,
And, heaving, lifts her leaden wings,
And sullen glides away:

I. 3.

Ten thousand forms, by pining Fancy view'd,
Dissolve.—Above the sparkling flood
When Phœbus rears his awful brow,
From lengthening lawn and valley low
The troops of fen-born mists retire.
Along the plain
The joyous swain
Eyes the gay villages again,
And gold illumin'd spire;
While on the billowy ether borne
Floats the loose lay's jovial measure;
And light along the fairy Pleasure,
Her green robes glittering to the morn,

Wantons on silken wing. And goblins all
To the damp dungeon shrink, or hoary hall,
Or westward, with impetuous flight,
Shoot to the desart realms of their congenial Night.

II. 1.

When first on Childhood's eager gaze
Life's varied landscape, stretch'd immense around,
Starts out of night profound,
Thy voice incites to tempt th' untrodden maze.
Fond he surveys thy mild maternal face,
His bashful eye still kindling as he views,
And, while thy lenient arm supports his pace,
With beating heart the unpland path pursues:
The path that leads, where, hung sublime,
And seen afar, youth's gallant trophies, bright
In Fancy's rainbow ray, invite
His wingy nerves to climb.

II. 2.

Pursue thy pleasurable way,
Safe in the guidance of thy heavenly guard,

While melting airs are heard
And soft-ey'd cherub forms around thee play:
Simplicity, in careless flowers array'd,
Prattling amusive in his accent meek;
And Modesty, half turning as afraid,
The smile just dimpling on his glowing cheek!
Content and Leisure, hand in hand
With Innocence and Peace, advance, and sing;
And Mirth, in many a mazy ring,
Frisks o'er the flowery land.

II. 3.

Frail man, how various is thy lot below!
To-day tho' gales propitious blow,
And Peace soft gliding down the sky
Lead Love along and Harmony,
To-morrow the gay scene deforms:
Then all around
The thunder's sound
Rolls rattling on through heaven's profound,
And down rush all the storms.
Ye days, that balmy influence shed,

When sweet Childhood, ever sprightly,
In paths of pleasure sported lightly,
Whither, ah whither are ye fled!
Ye cherub train, that brought him on his way,
O leave him not midst tumult and dismay;
For now youth's eminence he gains:
But what a weary length of lingering toil remains!

III. 1.

They shrink, they vanish into air,
Now Slander taints with pestilence the gale;
And mingling cries assail,
The wail of Wo, and groan of grim Despair.
Lo, wizard Envy from his serpent eye
Darts quick destruction in each baleful glance;
Pride smiling stern, and yellow Jealousy,
Frowning Disdain, and haggard Hate advance;
Behold, amidst the dire array,
Pale wither'd Care his giant-stature rears,
And lo, his iron hand prepares
To grasp its feeble prey.

III. 2.

Who now will guard bewilder'd youth
Safe from the fierce assault of hostile rage?
Such war can Virtue wage,
Virtue, that bears the sacred shield of Truth?
Alas! full oft on Guilt's victorious car,
The spoils of Virtue are in triumph borne;
While the fair captive, mark'd with many a scar,
In lone obscurity, oppress'd, forlorn,
Resigns to tears her angel form.
Ill-fated youth, then whither wilt thou fly?
No friend, no shelter now is nigh.
And onward rolls the storm.

III. 3.

But whence the sudden beam that shoots along?
Why shrink aghast the hostile throng?
Lo, from amidst Affliction's night,
Hope bursts all radiant on the sight:
Her words the troubled bosom sooth.

" Why thus dismay'd?
" Though foes invade,
" Hope ne'er is wanting to their aid,
" Who tread the path of truth.
" 'Tis I, who smooth the rugged way,
" I, who close the eyes of Sorrow,
" And with glad visions of to-morrow
" Repair the weary soul's decay.
" When Death's cold touch thrills to the freezing heart,
" Dreams of heaven's opening glories I impart,
" Till the freed spirit springs on high
" In rapture too severe for weak Mortality."

BIBLIOTECA BODLEIANA

PYGMÆO-GERANO-MACHIA:

THE

BATTLE OF THE PYGMIES AND CRANES.

FROM THE LATIN OF ADDISON.

1762.

THE pygmy-people, and the feather'd train,
Mingling in mortal combat on the plain,
I sing. Ye Muses, favour my designs,
Lead on my squadrons, and arrange the lines;
The flashing swords and fluttering wings display,
And long bills nibbling in the bloody fray;
Cranes darting with disdain on tiny foes,
Conflicting birds and men, and war's unnumber'd woes.
The wars and woes of heroes six feet long
Have oft resounded in Pierian song.

Who has not heard of Colchos' golden fleece,
And Argo mann'd with all the flower of Greece?
Of Thebes' fell brethren, Theseus stern of face,
And Peleus' son unrivall'd in the race,
Eneas founder of the Roman line,
And William glorious on the banks of Boyne?
Who has not learn'd to weep at Pompey's woes,
And over Blackmore's epic page to doze?
'Tis I, who dare attempt unusual strains,
Of hosts unsung, and unfrequented plains;
The small shrill trump, and chiefs of little size,
And armies rushing down the darken'd skies.
Where India reddens to the early dawn,
Winds a deep vale from vulgar eye withdrawn:
Bosom'd in groves the lowly region lies,
And rocky mountains round the border rise.
Here, till the doom of Fate its fall decreed,
The empire flourish'd of the pygmy-breed;
Here Industry perform'd, and Genius plann'd,
And busy multitudes o'erspread the land.
But now to these lone bounds if pilgrim stray,
Tempting through craggy cliffs the desperate way,

He finds the puny mansion fallen to earth,
Its godlings mouldering on th' abandon'd hearth;
And starts, where small white bones are spread around,
"Or little footsteps lightly print the ground;"
While the proud crane her nest securely builds,
Chattering amid the desolated fields.

But different fates befel her hostile rage,
While reign'd, invincible thro' many an age,
The dreaded Pygmy: rous'd by war's alarms
Forth rush'd the madding Mannikin to arms.
Fierce to the field of death the hero flies;
The faint Crane fluttering flaps the ground, and dies;
And by the victor borne (o'erwhelming load!)
With bloody bill loose-dangling marks the road.
And oft the wily dwarf in ambush lay,
And often made the callow young his prey;
With slaughter'd victims heap'd his board, and smil'd
T' avenge the parent's trespass on the child.
Oft, where his feather'd foe had rear'd her nest,
And laid her eggs and houshold gods to rest,
Burning for blood, in terrible array,
The eighteen-inch militia burst their way:

All went to wreck; the infant foeman fell,
Whence scarce his chirping bill had broke the shell.
Loud uproar hence, and rage of arms arose,
And the fell rancour of encountering foes;
Hence dwarfs and cranes one general havoc whelms,
And Death's grim visage scares the pygmy-realms.
Not half so furious blaz'd the warlike fire
Of Mice, high theme of the Meonian lyre;
When bold to battle march'd th' accouter'd frogs,
And the deep tumult thunder'd through the bogs,
Pierc'd by the javelin bulrush on the shore
Here agonizing roll'd the mouse in gore;
And there the frog (a scene full sad to see!)
Shorn of one leg, slow sprawl'd along on three:
He vaults no more with vigorous hops on high,
But mourns in hoarsest croaks his destiny.
And now the day of wo drew on apace,
A day of wo to all the pygmy-race,
When dwarfs were doom'd (but penitence was vain)
To rue each broken egg, and chicken slain.
For rous'd to vengeance by repeated wrong
From distant climes the long-bill'd regions throng:

From Strymon's lake, Cäyster's plashy meads,
And fens of Scythia green with rustling reeds;
From where the Danube winds thro' many a land,
And Mareotis laves th' Egyptian strand,
To rendezvous they waft on eager wing,
And wait assembled the returning spring.
Meanwhile they trim their plumes for length of flight,
Whet their keen beaks, and twisting claws, for fight;
Each crane the pygmy power in thought o'erturns,
And every bosom for the battle burns.

When genial gales the frozen air unbind,
The screaming legions wheel, and mount the wind:
Far in the sky they form their long array,
And land and ocean stretch'd immense survey
Deep deep beneath; and, triumphing in pride,
With clouds and winds commix'd, innumerous ride:
'Tis wild obstreperous clangour all, and heaven
Whirls, in tempestuous undulation driven.

Nor less th' alarm that shook the world below,
Where march'd in pomp of war th' embattled foe:
Where mannikins with haughty step advance,
And grasp the shield, and couch the quivering lance:

To right and left the lengthening lines they form,
And rank'd in deep array await the storm.
High in the midst the chieftain-dwarf was seen,
Of giant-stature, and imperial mien:
Full twenty inches tall, he strode along,
And view'd with lofty eye the wondering throng;
And while with many a scar his visage frown'd,
Bared his broad bosom, rough with many a wound
Of beaks and claws, disclosing to their sight
The glorious meed of high heroic might.
For with insatiate vengeance, he pursu'd,
And never-ending hate, the feathery brood.
Unhappy they, confiding in the length
Of horny beak, or talon's crooked strength,
Who durst abide his rage; the blade descends,
And from the panting trunk the pinion rends:
Laid low in dust the pinion waves no more,
The trunk disfigur'd stiffens in its gore.
What hosts of heroes fell beneath his force!
What heaps of chicken carnage mark'd his course!
How oft, O Strymon, thy lone banks along,
Did wailing Echo waft the funeral song!

And now from far the mingling clamours rise,
Loud and more loud rebounding through the skies.
From skirt to skirt of heaven, with stormy sway,
A cloud rolls on, and darkens all the day.
Near and more near descends the dreadful shade,
And now in battailous array display'd
On sounding wings, and screaming in their ire,
The cranes rush onward, and the fight require.
The pygmy warriors eye with fearless glare
The host thick swarming o'er the burthen'd air;
Thick swarming now, but to their native land
Doom'd to return a scanty straggling band.—
When sudden, darting down the depth of heaven,
Fierce on th' expecting foe the cranes are driven.
The kindling phrensy every bosom warms,
The region echoes to the crash of arms:
Loose feathers from th' encountering armies fly,
And in careering whirlwinds mount the sky.
To breathe from toil upsprings the panting crane,
Then with fresh vigour downward darts again.
Success in equal balance hovering hangs.
Here, on the sharp spear, mad with mortal pangs,

The bird transfix'd in bloody vortex whirls,
Yet fierce in death the threatening talon curls;
There, while the life-blood bubbles from his wound,
With little feet the pygmy beats the ground;
Deep from his breast the short short sob he draws,
And dying curses the keen-pointed claws.
Trembles the thundering field, thick cover'd o'er
With falchions, mangled wings, and streaming gore,
And pygmy arms, and beaks of ample size,
And here a claw, and there a finger lies.
Encompass'd round with heaps of slaughter'd foes,
All grim in blood the pygmy champion glows.
And on th' assailing host impetuous springs,
Careless of nibbling bills, and flapping wings;
And midst the tumult wheresoe'er he turns,
The battle with redoubled fury burns;
From ev'ry side th' avenging cranes amain
Throng, to o'erwhelm this terror of the plain.
When suddenly (for such the will of Jove)
A fowl enormous, sousing from above,
The gallant chieftain clutch'd, and, soaring high,
(Sad chance of battle!) bore him up the sky.

The cranes pursue, and clustering in a ring,
Chatter triumphant round the captive king.
But ah! what pangs each pygmy bosom wrung,
When, now to cranes a prey, on talons hung,
High in the clouds they saw their helpless lord,
His wriggling form still lessening as he soar'd.
Lo! yet again, with unabated rage,
In mortal strife the mingling hosts engage.
The crane with darted bill assaults the foe,
Hovering; then wheels aloft to scape the blow:
The dwarf in anguish aims the vengeful wound;
But whirls in empty air the falchion round.
Such was the scene, when midst the loud alarms
Sublime th' eternal Thunderer rose in arms.
When Briareus, by mad ambition driven,
Heav'd Pelion huge, and hurl'd it high at heaven.
Jove roll'd redoubling thunders from on high,
Mountains and bolts encounter'd in the sky;
Till one stupendous ruin whelm'd the crew,
Their vast limbs weltering wide in brimstone blue.
But now at length the pygmy legions yield,
And wing'd with terror fly the fatal field.

They raise a weak and melancholy wail,
All in distraction scattering o'er the vale.
Prone on their routed rear the cranes descend;
Their bills bite furious, and their talons rend:
With unrelenting ire they urge the chace,
Sworn to exterminate the hated race.
'Twas thus the Pygmy Name, once great in war,
For spoils of conquer'd cranes renown'd afar,
Perish'd. For, by the dread decree of Heaven,
Short is the date to earthly grandeur given,
And vain are all attempts to roam beyond
Where Fate has fix'd the everlasting bound.
Fallen are the trophies of Assyrian power,
And Persia's proud dominion is no more;
Yea, though to both superior far in fame,
Thine empire, Latium, is an empty name,
And now with lofty chiefs of ancient time,
The pygmy heroes roam th' elysian clime.
Or, if belief to matron-tales be due,
Full oft, in the belated shepherd's view,
Their frisking forms, in gentle green array'd,
Gambol secure amid the moonlight glade.

Secure, for no alarming cranes molest,
And all their woes in long oblivion rest:
Down the deep vale, and narrow winding way,
They foot it featly, rang'd in ringlets gay:
'Tis joy and frolic all, where'er they rove,
And Fairy-people is the name they love.

THE HARES.

A FABLE.

YES, yes, I grant the sons of earth
Are doom'd to trouble from their birth.
We all of sorrow have our share;
But say, is yours without compare?
Look round the world; perhaps you'll find
Each individual of our kind
Press'd with an equal load of ill,
Equal at least. Look further still,
And own your lamentable case
Is little short of happiness.
In yonder hut that stands alone
Attend to Famine's feeble moan;
Or view the couch where Sickness lies,
Mark his pale cheek, and languid eyes,
His frame by strong convulsion torn,
His struggling sighs, and looks forlorn.

Or see, transfix'd with keener pangs,
Where o'er his hoard the miser hangs;
Whistles the wind; he starts, he stares,
Nor Slumber's balmy blessing shares;
Despair, Remorse, and Terror roll
Their tempests on his harass'd soul.
But here perhaps it may avail
T' enforce our reasoning with a tale.
Mild was the morn, the sky serene,
The jolly hunting band convene,
The beagle's breast with ardour burns,
The bounding steed the champaign spurns,
And Fancy oft the game descries
Thro' the hound's nose, and huntsman's eyes.
Just then, a council of the hares
Had met, on national affairs.
The chiefs were set; while o'er their head
The furze its frizzled covering spread.
Long lists of grievances were heard,
And general discontent appear'd.
"Our harmless race shall every savage
"Both quadruped and biped ravage?

" Shall horses, hounds, and hunters still
" Unite their wits to work us ill?
" The youth, his parent's sole delight,
" Whose tooth the dewy lawns invite,
" Whose pulse in every vein beats strong,
" Whose limbs leap light the vales along,
" May yet ere noontide meet his death,
" And lie dismember'd on the heath.
" For youth, alas, nor cautious age,
" Nor strength, nor speed, eludes their rage.
" In every field we meet the foe,
" Each gale comes fraught with sounds of wo;
" The morning but awakes our fears,
" The evening sees us bath'd in tears.
" But must we ever idly grieve,
" Nor strive our fortunes to relieve?
" Small is each individual's force:
" To stratagem be our recourse;
" And then, from all our tribes combin'd,
" The murderer to his cost may find
" No foes are weak, whom Justice arms,
" Whom Concord leads, and Hatred warms.

" Be rous'd; or liberty acquire,
" Or in the great attempt expire."
He said no more, for in his breast
Conflicting thoughts the voice suppress'd:
The fire of vengeance seem'd to stream
From his swoln eyeball's yellow gleam.
And now the tumults of the war,
Mingling confusedly from afar,
Swell in the wind. Now louder cries
Distinct of hounds and men arise.
Forth from the brake, with beating heart,
Th' assembled hares tumultuous start,
And, every straining nerve on wing,
Away precipitately spring.
The hunting band, a signal given,
Thick thundering o'er the plain are driven;
O'er cliff abrupt, and shrubby mound,
And river broad, impetuous bound;
Now plunge amid the forest shades,
Glance through the openings of the glades;
Now o'er the level valley sweep,
Now with short steps strain up the steep;

While backward from the hunter's eyes
The landscape like a torrent flies.
At last an ancient wood they gain'd,
By pruner's ax yet unprofan'd.
High o'er the rest, by Nature rear'd,
The oak's majestic boughs appear'd;
Beneath, a copse of various hue
In barbarous luxuriance grew.
No knife had curb'd the rambling sprays,
No hand had wove th' implicit maze.
The flowering thorn, self-taught to wind,
The hazle's stubborn stem intwin'd,
And bramble twigs were wreath'd around,
And rough furze crept along the ground.
Here sheltering, from the sons of murther,
The hares drag their tired limbs no further.
  But lo, the western wind erelong
Was loud, and roar'd the woods among;
From rustling leaves, and crashing boughs,
The sound of wo and war arose.
The hares distracted scour the grove,
As terror and amazement drove;

But danger, wheresoe'er they fled,
Still seem'd impending o'er their head.
Now crowded in a grotto's gloom,
All hope extinct, they wait their doom.
Dire was the silence, till, at length,
Even from despair deriving strength,
With bloody eye, and furious look,
A daring youth arose and spoke.
" O wretched race, the scorn of Fate,
" Whom ills of every sort await!
" O, curs'd with keenest sense to feel
" The sharpest sting of every ill!
" Say ye, who, fraught with mighty scheme,
" Of liberty and vengeance dream,
" What now remains? To what recess
" Shall we our weary steps address,
" Since Fate is evermore pursuing
" All ways, and means to work our ruin?
" Are we alone, of all beneath,
" Condemn'd to misery worse than death!
" Must we, with fruitless labour, strive
" In misery worse than death to live!

" No. Be the smaller ill our choice:
" So dictates Nature's powerful voice.
" Death's pang will in a moment cease;
" And then, All hail, eternal peace!"
Thus while he spoke, his words impart
The dire resolve to every heart.
A distant lake in prospect lay,
That glittering in the solar ray,
Gleam'd thro' the dusky trees, and shot
A trembling light along the grot.
Thither with one consent they bend,
Their sorrows with their lives to end,
While each, in thought, already hears
The water hissing in his ears.
Fast by the margin of the lake,
Conceal'd within a thorny brake,
A Linnet sate, whose careless lay
Amus'd the solitary day.
Careless he sung, for on his breast
Sorrow no lasting trace impress'd;
When suddenly he heard a sound
Of swift feet traversing the ground.

Quick to the neighbouring tree he flies,
Thence trembling casts around his eyes;
No foe appear'd, his fears were vain;
Pleas'd he renews the sprightly strain.
The hares, whose noise had caused his fright,
Saw with surprise the linnet's flight.
Is there on earth a wretch, they said,
Whom our approach can strike with dread?
An instantaneous change of thought
To tumult every bosom wrought.
So fares the system-building sage,
Who, plodding on from youth to age,
At last on some foundation-dream
Has rear'd aloft his goodly scheme,
And prov'd his predecessors fools,
And bound all Nature by his rules;
So fares he in that dreadful hour,
When injur'd Truth exerts her power,
Some new phenomenon to raise:
Which, bursting on his frighted gaze,
From its proud summit to the ground
Proves the whole edifice unsound.

" Children," thus spoke a hare sedate,
Who oft had known th' extremes of fate,
" In slight events the docile mind
" May hints of good instruction find.
" That our condition is the worst,
" And we with such misfortunes curs'd
" As all comparison defy,
" Was late the universal cry,
" When lo, an accident so slight
" As yonder little linnet's flight,
" Has made your stubborn heart confess
" (So your amazement bids me guess)
" That all our load of woes and fears
" Is but a part of what he bears.
" Where can he rest secure from harms,
" Whom even a helpless hare alarms?
" Yet he repines not at his lot,
" When past the danger is forgot:
" On yonder bough he trims his wings,
" And with unusual rapture sings:
" While we, less wretched, sink beneath
" Our lighter ills, and rush to death.

" No more of this unmeaning rage,
" But hear, my friends, the words of age.
" When by the winds of autumn driven
" The scatter'd clouds fly cross the heaven,
" Oft have we, from some mountain's head,
" Beheld th' alternate light and shade
" Sweep the long vale. Here hovering lowers
" The shadowy cloud; there downwards pours,
" Streaming direct, a flood of day,
" Which from the view flies swift away;
" It flies, while other shades advance,
" And other streaks of sunshine glance.
" Thus chequer'd is the life below
" With gleams of joy and clouds of wo.
" Then hope not, while we journey on,
" Still to be basking in the sun:
" Nor fear, tho' now in shades ye mourn,
" That sunshine will no more return.
" If, by your terrors overcome,
" Ye fly before th' approaching gloom,
" The rapid clouds your flight pursue,
" And darkness still o'ercasts your view.

" Who longs to reach the radiant plain
" Must onward urge his course amain;
" For doubly swift the shadow flies,
" When 'gainst the gale the pilgrim plies.
" At least be firm, and undismay'd
" Maintain your ground! the fleeting shade
" Erelong spontaneous glides away,
" And gives you back th' enlivening ray.
" Lo, while I speak, our danger past!
" No more the shrill horn's angry blast
" Howls in our ear; the savage roar
" Of war and murder is no more.
" Then snatch the moment fate allows,
" Nor think of past or future woes."
He spoke; and hope revives; the lake
That instant one and all forsake,
In sweet amusement to employ
The present sprightly hour of joy.
Now from the western mountain's brow,
Compass'd with clouds of various glow,
The sun a broader orb displays,
And shoots aslope his ruddy rays.

The lawn assumes a fresher green,
And dew drops spangle all the scene.
The balmy zephyr breathes along,
The shepherd sings his tender song,
With all their lays the groves resound,
And falling waters murmur round,
Discord and care were put to flight,
And all was peace, and calm delight.

EPITAPH:

BEING PART OF AN INSCRIPTION FOR A MONUMENT TO BE ERECTED BY A GENTLEMAN TO THE MEMORY OF HIS LADY.

FAREWELL, my best-lov'd; whose heavenly mind
Genius with virtue, strength with softness join'd;
Devotion, undebas'd by pride or art,
With meek simplicity, and joy of heart;
Though sprightly, gentle; though polite, sincere,
And only of thyself a judge severe;
Unblam'd, unequall'd in each sphere of life,
The tenderest Daughter, Sister, Parent, Wife.
In thee their Patroness th' afflicted lost;
Thy friends, their pattern, ornament, and boast;
And I—but ah, can words my loss declare,
Or paint th' extremes of transport and despair!
O Thou, beyond what verse or speech can tell,
My guide, my friend, my best-belov'd, farewell!

ODE ON LORD H**'s BIRTH-DAY.

AMUSE, unskill'd in venal praise,
Unstain'd with flattery's art:
Who loves simplicity of lays
Breath'd ardent from the heart;
While gratitude and joy inspire,
Resumes the long-unpractis'd lyre,
To hail, O H**, thy Natal Morn:
No gaudy wreathe of flowers she weaves,
But twines with oak the laurel leaves,
Thy cradle to adorn.

For not on beds of gaudy flowers
Thine ancestors reclin'd,
Where Sloth dissolves, and Spleen devours
All energy of mind.
To hurl the dart, to ride the car,
To stem the deluges of war,
And snatch from Fate a sinking land;
Trample th' Invader's lofty crest,
And from his grasp the dagger wrest,
And desolating brand:

'Twas this, that rais'd th' illustrious Line
To match the first in fame!
A thousand years have seen it shine
With unabated flame.
Have seen thy mighty Sires appear
Foremost in Glory's high career,
The pride and pattern of the Brave.
Yet, pure from lust of blood their fire,
And from Ambition's wild desire,
They triumph'd but to save.

The Muse with joy attends their way
The vale of peace along;
There to its Lord the village gay
Renews the grateful song.
Yon castle's glittering towers contain
No pit of wo, nor clanking chain,
Nor to the suppliant's wail resound;
The open doors the needy bless,
Th' unfriended hail their calm recess,
And gladness smiles around.

There to the sympathetic heart
Life's best delights belong,
To mitigate the mourner's smart,
To guard the weak from wrong.
Ye Sons of Luxury, be wise:
Know, happiness for ever flies
The cold and solitary breast;
Then let the social instinct glow,
And learn to feel another's wo,
And in his joy be bless'd.

O yet, ere Pleasure plant her snare
For unsuspecting youth;
Ere Flattery her song prepare
To check the voice of Truth;
O may his country's guardian power
Attend the slumbering Infant's bower,
And bright, inspiring dreams impart;
To rouse th' hereditary fire,
To kindle each sublime desire,
Exalt, and warm the heart.

Swift to reward a Parent's fears,
A Parent's hopes to crown,
Roll on in peace, ye blooming years,
That rear him to renown;
When in his finish'd form and face
Admiring multitudes shall trace
Each patrimonial charm combin'd,
The courteous yet majestic mien,
The liberal smile, the look serene,
The great and gentle mind.

Yet, though thou draw a nation's eyes,
And win a nation's love,
Let not thy towering mind despise
The village and the grove.
No slander there shall wound thy fame,
No ruffian take his deadly aim,
No rival weave the secret snare:
For Innocence with angel smile,
Simplicity that knows no guile,
And Love and Peace are there.

When winds the mountain oak assail,
And lay its glories waste,
Content may slumber in the vale,
Unconscious of the blast.
Thro' scenes of tumult while we roam,
The heart, alas! is ne'er at home,
It hopes in time to roam no more;
The mariner, not vainly brave,
Combats the storm, and rides the wave,
To rest at last on shore.

Ye proud, ye selfish, ye severe,
How vain your mask of state!
The good alone have joy sincere,
The good alone are great:
Great, when, amid the vale of peace,
They bid the plaint of sorrow cease,
And hear the voice of artless praise;
As when along the trophy'd plain
Sublime they lead the victor train,
While shouting nations gaze.

TO THE RIGHT HON.

LADY CHARLOTTE GORDON,

DRESSED IN A TARTAN SCOTCH BONNET, WITH PLUMES, &c.

WHY, Lady, wilt thou bind thy lovely brow
With the dread semblance of that warlike helm,
That nodding plume, and wreath of various glow,
That grac'd the chiefs of Scotia's ancient realm?

Thou knowest that virtue is of power the source,
And all her magic to thy eyes is given;
We own their empire, while we feel their force,
Beaming with the benignity of heaven.

The plumy helmet, and the martial mien,
Might dignify Minerva's awful charms;
But more resistless far th' Idalian queen—
Smiles, graces, gentleness, her only arms.

THE HERMIT.

AT the close of the day, when the hamlet is still,
And mortals the sweets of forgetfulness prove,
When nought but the torrent is heard on the hill,
And nought but the nightingale's song in the grove:
'Twas thus, by the cave of the mountain afar,
While his harp rung symphonious, a Hermit began;
No more with himself or with nature at war,
He thought as a Sage, though he felt as a Man.

"Ah! why, all abandon'd to darkness and wo,
"Why, lone Philomela, that languishing fall?
"For Spring shall return, and a lover bestow,
"And Sorrow no longer thy bosom inthral.
"But, if pity inspire thee, renew the sad lay,
"Mourn, sweetest complainer, man calls thee to mourn;
"O soothe him, whose pleasures like thine pass away:
"Full quickly they pass—but they never return.

" Now gliding remote, on the verge of the sky,
" The Moon half extinguish'd her crescent displays:
" But lately I mark'd, when majestic on high
" She shone, and the planets were lost in her blaze.
" Roll on, thou fair orb, and with gladness pursue
" The path that conducts thee to splendor again.
" But Man's faded glory what change shall renew!
" Ah fool! to exult in a glory so vain!

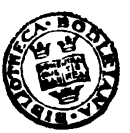
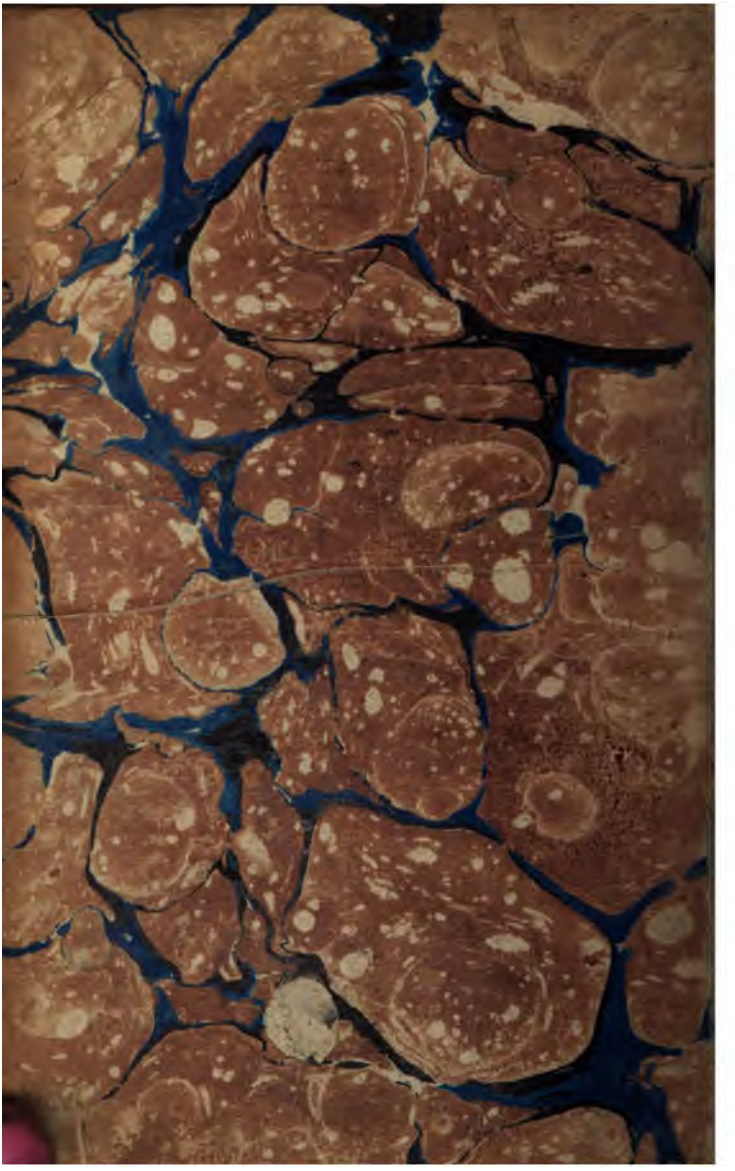
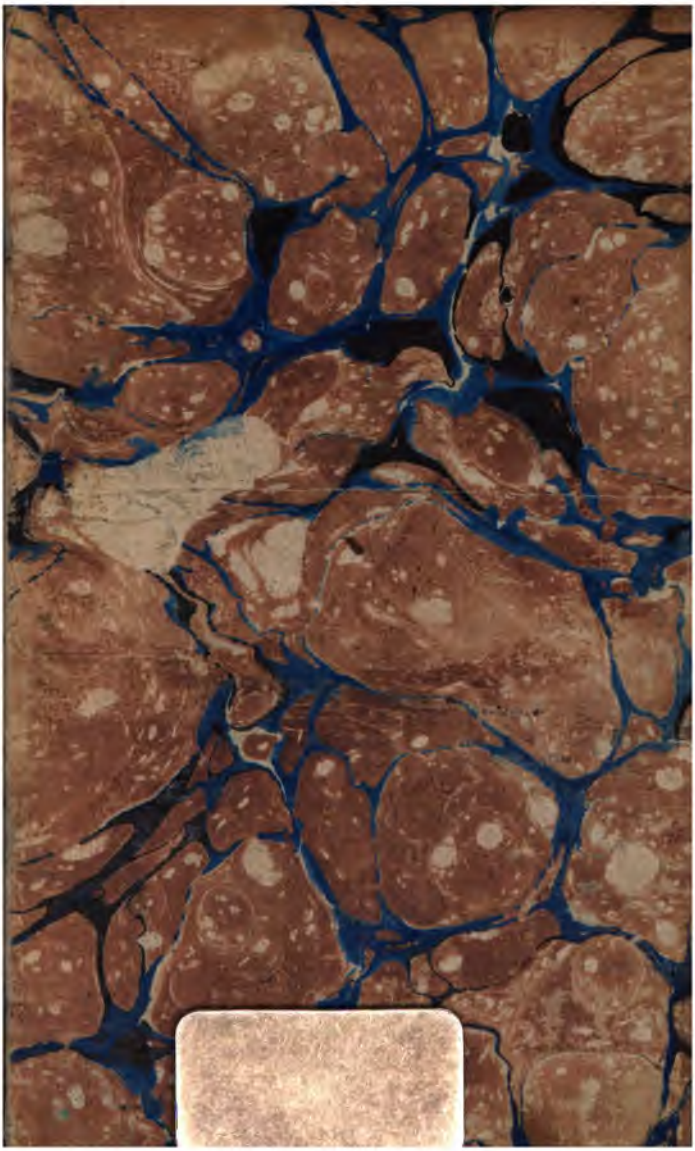
" 'Tis night, and the landscape is lovely no more;
" I mourn, but, ye woodlands, I mourn not for you;
" For morn is approaching, your charms to restore,
" Perfum'd with fresh fragrance, and glittering with dew.
" Nor yet for the ravage of winter I mourn;
" Kind Nature the embryo blossom will save.
" But when shall Spring visit the mouldering urn!
" O when shall it dawn on the night of the grave!"

' 'Twas thus, by the glare of false Science betray'd,
' That leads, to bewilder; and dazzles, to blind:
' My thoughts wont to roam, from shade onward to shade,
' Destruction before me, and sorrow behind.

" O pity, great Father of light," then I cry'd,
" Thy creature who fain would not wander from Thee;
" Lo, humbled in dust, I relinquish my pride:
" From doubt and from darkness thou only canst free."

' And darkness and doubt are now flying away.
' No longer I roam in conjecture forlorn.
' So breaks on the traveller, faint, and astray,
' The bright and the balmy effulgence of morn.
' See Truth, Love, and Mercy, in triumph descending,
And Nature all glowing in Eden's first bloom!
' On the cold cheek of Death smiles and roses are blending,
' And Beauty immortal awakes from the tomb.'

THE END.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